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Nick Carter Stories

THE MIDDLE LINK
or Nick Carter's Reward

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NICK CARTER STORIES

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THE MIDDLE LINK;

Or, NICK CARTER'S REWARD.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

GROUNDS FOR SUSPICION.

The case, which soon developed into a most extraordinary one, began with an equally singular situation.

Nick Carter was having his hair cut. He could not consistently follow the man, certainly not without appearing ridiculous. No man wants to appear in public with his hair half cut.

Nick was seated in an uptown barber shop, in which he was a total stranger. Reflected in a broad mirror on the wall confronting him he could see the shop door nearly behind him, also other parts of the room at various angles.

A man was entering from the street. Nick saw him plainly through a plate-glass window in the closed door. He did not know the man, not even by sight, but he was instantly conscious of a feeling of distrust, one of those subtle impressions, due partly to his very sensitive nature and finely trained detective instinct.

There was still another reason for it. The stranger hesitated before entering. He glanced sharply at the occupants of the four chairs and at the barbers at work upon them, also at a telephone on a stand in one corner.

He entered upon seeing the telephone—an erect, well-built man of forty, with a strong, dark face, somewhat sunken black eyes, and hair sprinkled with gray. Addressing the proprietor of the shop, one Tony Legard, he said, a bit hurriedly:

"I say, sir, may I use your telephone for a local call? It will save me from hunting up a pay station, and I'm not familiar with these parts of the city."

"Certainly. Help yourself," Tony Legard readily consented, with a wave of his hand toward the instrument. "Glad to accommodate you."

"Thank you, sir. I'll do as much for you when it comes right."

The stranger seated himself at the telephone. It was in the farthest corner from where the detective was seated.

Nick still could see him in the mirror, however, and he furtively watched him. He saw him remove the receiver, then carefully hood the mouthpiece with both hands while he called the desired number—a precaution that immediately increased the detective's misgivings.

Nick listened, but he could not catch the number.

Having obtained the connection, the stranger appeared to feel that further caution was unnecessary. He removed one hand from the mouthpiece and held the receiver to his ear, saying carelessly:

"Hello! Is that you, Joey? Ah, just so; I thought I recognized your voice. Is the digger there? I want him at the phone. I'll hold the wire."

There was a brief pause.

"The digger?" thought Nick, wondering. "A clam digger, perhaps, or some one who digs cellars, cisterns, wells, or——"

The stranger spoke again.

"Be there in half a minute, eh? Very good, Joey. I'll wait."

Still furtively watching the man, Nick saw him glance stealthily at the nearest barber, as if to discover whether he had been listening. No one in the shop appeared to have been doing so, however, and the stranger presently turned again to the telephone.

"That you, Dig?" he inquired; then quickly added, evidently in reply to a question from Dig: "Yes, certainly. You ought to know my voice by this time. Ha, ha, very good! Regarding that meat, Dig, it must be delivered today. Make sure there is no delay. It may be needed

early, so send it along as soon as possible. What's that? Yes, yes, of course, or it would not be needed. The S. S. matter was cleaned up to-day. Look after the other. All right, Dig, only be sure of it. That's all. Good-by."

The stranger arose, tipped Tony Legard a quarter, then sauntered out of the shop with an air of one whose mind was relieved of an important business obligation.

Nick Carter had fixed the face of the man indelibly in his mind. He was the only person in the shop who had paid any attention to the stranger's communication. Only one man in ten thousand would have felt any great interest in it. Only one in a hundred thousand would have detected anything in it warranting serious suspicion.

All the while, nevertheless, numerous questions had been springing up in the mind of Nick Carter.

Why did the man hesitate before entering? Why the apprehensive light in his eyes when he looked into the shop? Did he fear that it might contain some one who would recognize him? Why should he have feared, providing that his communication had no secret significance and related to nothing illegal?

Nick noticed, too, that the stranger did not mention his name, but sought to establish his identity by vocal recognition, a circumstance fully convincing Nick that he did not wish to be known by any hearer in the shop. He had mentioned only the given names, or nicknames, perhaps, of the two persons with whom he had talked, evincing additional caution.

What was the occasion for it? What was the meat to which he had referred? Why did he not designate it more definitely? To whom was it to be delivered, whose name was also withheld? Why was it likely to be needed early? Was it because, as intimated, business referred to only as the S. S. matter had been cleaned up that day?

What was this S. S. matter that must be designated only with initials?

What was the occasion for such circumspection? What need for this very obvious caution?

These were a few of the many questions that had sprung up in the mind of Nick Carter—while other hearers attached no importance whatever to the strange communication.

Nick continued to think about it, and about the man. Presently, when the barber had nearly finished his work, Nick glanced up at him and remarked:

"I suppose you have that telephone for the convenience of your customers?"

"Yes, sir, chiefly," replied Legard, in whose chair Nick was seated.

"Do you know the man who used it a few minutes ago?"

"I don't, sir."

"Even seen him before?"

"Not that I remember."

"Did you hear what number he called?"

"I did not," Legard replied, shaking his head. "Vasca did, perhaps. I say, Tom, did you hear the phone number that fellow called?" he added, turning to the barber whose chair was nearest to the telephone stand.

"Phone number?" Vasca turned with his razor poised above the man he was shaving. "No, Tony, I didn't. I wasn't listening."

No one volunteered the desired information. It appeared very evident, indeed, that not a person in the shop had paid the slightest attention to the stranger—barring only the famous New York detective.

"It does not matter," said Nick indifferently. "I wondered who the man was; that's all. Keep the change."

Nick added the last while giving Legard a dollar for his services, and he somehow felt that it was a dollar well spent. Ten minutes had passed since the stranger departed, and he had disappeared when the detective emerged to the street.

Nick hailed a taxicab and went home. It was five o'clock when he entered his Madison Avenue residence. He found his two chief assistants in the library office, Chick Carter and Patsy Garvan, both of whom had just returned from the district court.

"Get me a wire to Sing Sing, Patsy," Nick said abruptly, while he opened his roll-top desk. "I want the prison warden."

Patsy hastened to obey, while Chick inquired curiously, noting a certain grim gleam in the detective's eyes:

"What's wrong in Sing Sing, Nick?"

"That's what I want to find out."

"You think there is something doing?"

"I suspect it."

"Why so?"

"Because of what I saw and heard in a barber shop half an hour ago."

"In a barber shop?" echoed Chick, gazing. "What was it?"

Nick informed him as briefly as possible, yet covering most of the points already set forth.

"Well, well, that was quite extraordinary," Chick remarked after listening. "But why seek an explanation in Sing Sing?"

"Because of the two letters applied to a matter of some kind," said Nick. "S. S. always suggests Sing Sing to me."

"Ah, I see. There may be something in that."

"They might signify secret service equally well, of course, but for one reason," Nick added: "The man did not look good to me. He had a shifty eye and a sinister mouth. He looked bad. Much more like a man who might have relations with Sing Sing, or some of its inmates, than with any secret-service official, or——"

Nick was interrupted by Patsy.

"I've got the prison office, chief, but the warden is away," said he. "He won't return until to-morrow afternoon."

"Who is on the wire?"

"Delano, one of the deputies."

"Ask him whether—hold on! I'll do the talking myself," Nick abruptly digressed, rising and taking the telephone from Patsy. "Hello! This is Nick Carter talking, Delano. Do you get me?"

"Sure thing, Nick," came the quick response. "What's up?"

"You tell me," Nick replied. "Has anything unusual occurred up there since yesterday?"

"Here in the prison?"

"Yes. I have reasons for thinking so."

"You're in wrong, I guess," said Delano. "I know of nothing unusual, surely nothing wrong."

"You would have heard of it?"

"Undoubtedly."

"That's all, then," said Nick. "Telephone to me at once, however, in case anything turns up which appears out of the ordinary. I will explain, Delano, when I see you."

"All right, Nick, I'll do so," Delano replied. "By the way, since I happen to think of it, one of our boarders whom you sent up here for life has cashed in."

"That so? Who?"

"That swell guy who did the double act as a bank president and card pusher, and who framed up the croaking of that fellow in Fordham. You remember him, of course—Edward Eggleston Oakley."

"Remember him—I should say so!" Nick declared. "Dead, is he?"

"That's what. Died yesterday."

"Suddenly?"

"Not very. He has been in the hospital for a month. He's been running down like a clock with a broken pendulum."

"What was the trouble?"

"Give it up. His case puzzled the prison physician. He couldn't size it up, nor save the man. Oakley was found dead on his cot yesterday morning."

"Has there been an autopsy?"

"No. The body was claimed by a New York doctor."

"Claimed?" questioned Nick suspiciously. "Claimed on what grounds? Oakley had no relatives here."

"I don't know any of the particulars," Delano replied. "The warden took full charge of the whole business. He is the only one who can inform you."

"Where is he, Delano?"

"Gone up to Albany to see the commissioners. He'll be here at three to-morrow afternoon."

"As I understand it, then, Oakley's body has been delivered to a New York physician?"

"Exactly."

"When?"

"This morning."

"How shipped?"

"By train. Two men called for it and took it away."

"Do you know the name of the New York physician?"

"No. Only the warden can tell you——"

"Delano," Nick forcibly interrupted, "I will be there to see the warden at three o'clock to-morrow. I want to know every fact relating to this matter. I don't like the looks of it."

CHAPTER II.

THE TORN ENVELOPE.

There is nothing at all strange, ordinarily, in the illness and death of a Sing Sing convict. Such fatalities constantly occur in the natural order of things. Men must die in Sing Sing, as well as out of it. It would be strange, indeed, if the percentage within were not the greater.

Nevertheless, when Nick Carter turned from the telephone and told Chick and Patsy what he had heard, his face also told them that he was filled with unusual misgivings, as had appeared in his last remark to Deputy Delano.

Nearly a year had passed since the conviction and imprisonment of Edward Eggleston Oakley, that versatile genius, who, occupying an enviable position in society and for several years president of the Reliance Trust Company, had gone to the bad, financially and morally, and not only ruined himself, but also very nearly wrecked several other banks while artfully assuming the dual character of David Maitland and conducting a swell gambling house for the purpose of secretly fleecing his wealthy friends and acquaintances, or whomever he could lure into his net, finally resulting in the murder of one of his victims to prevent a complete exposure of his crimes.

Most of these sensational circumstances were readily recalled by Nick Carter, who had run Oakley down with the help of Chick and Patsy, and sent him to Sing Sing for life, together with the gang of gamesters involved in the celebrated case.

"By Jove, I now am inclined to agree with you, Nick," said Chick, after hearing what Delano had stated. "It looks very much as if the S. S. matter mentioned by the unknown man in the barber shop related to the death of Oakley and the removal of his body."

"Gee! it looks to me like a copper-riveted cinch," Patsy declared. "Think what he said about the delivery of some meat. Meat be hanged! It's dollars to fried holes that he referred to Oakley's body."

"Or some other body," Nick said pointedly, resuming his seat at his desk.

"Some other body?"

"Exactly."

"You mean?" questioned Patsy tersely.

"I am not convinced that Oakley is dead," Nick replied. "He was in bang-up good health when I last saw him, and that was less than three months ago. It is very strange that he went to pieces so quickly, if the report is really true."

"You evidently suspect trickery?" suggested Chick.

"Why not? Oakley's double life and his masterly assumption of the swell gambling-house proprietor, David Maitland, shows him to be a trickster of the first water, as well as a born actor. His skill in making up and playing a part in disguise equals my own."

"And that's going some, chief, for fair," put in Patsy.

"Furthermore," Nick added, "Oakley was very keen and farsighted. He must have known that exposure and imprisonment were inevitable, sooner or later, and he is too clever not to have planned accordingly. This whole business may have been a frame-up to get him out of Sing Sing."

"Very possibly," Chick agreed.

"Can't we find out at once, chief, what New York doctor received the body?" asked Patsy. "We then could dig into the case without delay."

"I don't think so," said Nick. "Surely not, Patsy, if my suspicions are correct. Steps must have been taken, in that case, to preclude tracking the culprits and exposing their game, which they would reason might soon be suspected. There may be no New York doctor in the case, nor any other doctor, perhaps. The body may not have been brought to New York. It may have been taken from the train at some suburban station."

"That's true, chief."

"You may call up the Grand Union, nevertheless, and inquire," said Nick. "There is a possibility, of course, that the body was brought here and openly received by some city physician. In that case, however, I am either wrong in my suspicions, or the game is much deeper than appears on the surface."

"I'll soon find out," said Patsy, hastening to the telephone. "That can be done in two shakes of a lamb's tail."

"Go ahead," said Nick.

It was accomplished almost as quickly as Patsy had predicted, and the result was a negative one, as Nick had anticipated. No body had been received at the station that

day, nor was any information obtainable concerning the shipment of Oakley's remains.

"That's no more than I expected," said Nick. "Assuming that I am right in my suspicions, the crooks have taken care to cover their tracks. We can accomplish nothing until after I have learned what Henderson, the prison warden, can tell me, as well as the physician who attended Oakley. That ground may best be covered by a visit to Sing Sing. I shall go up there to-morrow."

"That's the proper caper, chief," said Patsy. "I'll wager, too, that the game proves worth the candle. There is something crooked in the wind, chief, as sure as I'm a foot high."

"We'll try to straighten it out, Patsy, in that case," said the detective simply.

Four o'clock the following afternoon found Nick Carter seated in Warden Henderson's private office, in company with the latter and the prison physician, Doctor Wicklow. Nick had informed both of the occasion for his visit, and both were strongly inclined to ridicule his suspicions.

"Why, Carter, what do you take me for?" Doctor Wicklow demanded, after hearing the detective's statements. "Not an out-and-out bonehead, I hope."

"Far from it, Wicklow, I assure you," Nick protested, smiling.

"I hope not," continued the physician. "I am over seven, my dear man. I'm nearly sixty years old. I've been an M. D. for forty years, and in constant practice. Do you think for a moment, Carter, that I can't tell whether a man is dead or alive? Do you really imagine that I could be buncoed in any such way as you have suggested? Not by a long chalk, Carter; not on your life!"

"You feel sure, then——"

"Absolutely sure!" Doctor Wicklow cut in emphatically. "Oakley was dead, as dead as a doornail, when I was called to his cot last Tuesday morning. He was a corpse, as cold and stiff a corpse as I ever saw, and you can bank your pile on that statement."

"You have admitted, nevertheless, Wicklow, that the case puzzled you?" Nick remarked tentatively.

"Very true," Doctor Wicklow admitted. "But physicians are frequently puzzled. No two cases are exactly alike. It now is my opinion that Oakley died of a complication of diseases, resulting in a sudden failure of the heart functions. His liver was bad. His kidneys were wrong. I found evidence of both, and while I treated him for both, and hoped to build him up, I could see only too plainly that he was in a rapid decline. Prison life and prison fare completely undermined his health. He could not stand them, Nick, and he finally went down and out like a falling rocket. Nothing on earth could have saved him."

"I still suspect, nevertheless, that something on earth can produce all the symptoms you have mentioned," Nick replied, a bit pointedly.

"Rot!" Doctor Wicklow exclaimed. "That's out-and-out nonsense. Take my word for it, Nick, Oakley is dead—as dead as a doornail, or any other old piece of iron."

"It strikes me, too, Nick, that you have got a bee in your bonnet," said Warden Henderson, laughing. "I know that would be quite extraordinary, of course, but I cannot help feeling that you are wrong."

"Right or wrong, Henderson, I have gone so far in this matter that I shall not stop until I have sifted it to the bottom," replied Nick decidedly. "Having told my story, therefore, I wish to hear yours. I want all of the circumstances in connection with the case."

"You shall have them, Nick, to be sure."

"How did it happen, Henderson, that Oakley's body was given to a New York physician?"

"It was willed to him something like two years ago."

"Willed to him?"

"Yes, in effect," replied Henderson. "The physician is Doctor Andrew Arbuckle, a specialist in diseases of the brain and all classes of insanity. He conducts a private sanitarium out Fordham way, and has a very good reputation."

"I have heard of him," said Nick. "Continue."

"It appears that he and Oakley were very well acquainted, were quite good friends, in fact, and that Oakley was deeply interested in Doctor Arbuckle's professional work and investigations. Having no relatives and not expecting to marry, he volunteered to give his body to Arbuckle for dissection after his death, and he signed an agreement to that effect, sworn to before a notary, and directing that his body should be delivered to Doctor Arbuckle on demand."

"Have you seen the order to that effect?" questioned Nick.

"Certainly," Henderson quickly replied. "Doctor Arbuckle called here on the morning Oakley died."

"The same morning, eh?"

"Yes. He showed me the order and stated the circumstances. I called up the notary by telephone and verified the physician's statements. What more could one ask?" Henderson demanded. "Oakley's sentence expired when he died. I had no wish to interfere with his post-mortem arrangements, and I thought Doctor Arbuckle had a legal claim on the body. I certainly did not want it, Nick, under the circumstances, so I told Doctor Arbuckle he could have it. He came with a local undertaker yesterday morning, and the body was boxed and taken to Fordham, presumably destined for the dissecting room in his sanitarium. That's all there was to it."

It was not the course Nick Carter would have shaped under such circumstances, very far from it, but he made no deprecatory comments. He saw nothing to be gained by criticism, the matter having gone too far for prevention, so he took it up as he found it and made only such inquiries as then might serve his purpose.

"Did you know of this agreement, Henderson, before Oakley died?" he asked, after a moment.

"No, I did not."

"You could not have informed Doctor Arbuckle, then," said Nick. "How did he learn so quickly of Oakley's death? You say he called here on the morning he died?"

"He was informed by Oakley's lawyer."

"Oakley's lawyer, eh? Who is he?"

"Donald Dykeman, of Yonkers."

"How long had he been in Oakley's employ?"

"All the while Oakley has been here."

"What use had he for a lawyer? He was in for life."

"He hoped to get a new trial, or obtain a pardon. He has kept Dykeman at work on both strings."

"Has Dykeman been coming here to see him?"

"Occasionally."

"Under the customary restrictions, of course."

"Yes, invariably."

"He could not, then, have slipped Oakley anything in the drug line?"

"No, nor any other line, Nick," Henderson said flatly. "That's out of the question."

"Drug be hanged!" Doctor Wicklow interposed derisively. "You're all wrong, Nick, entirely wrong. Oakley died a natural death, and you can bet on it."

"Time will tell," Nick replied. "I'm not in a betting mood. With whom has Oakley been corresponding?"

"Only with his lawyer," said the warden.

"Has he received any packages by mail, or express?"

"No, none."

"Only letters?"

"Letters and occasional newspapers."

"You opened all of them, of course?"

"Certainly."

"Of what did the correspondence consist?"

"It related entirely to the work Dykeman was doing."

"You detected nothing wrong in his letters?"

"Nothing whatever, Nick."

"Were the envelopes and letter sheets of an ordinary kind?"

"They appeared to be so."

"Could any of them be found? I would like very much to see one of them, Henderson, if possible."

"It's barely possible that one might be found in the refuse basket," replied Henderson. "This reminds me, too, that part of the flap from one of the envelopes was found near the cot on the morning he died. That now strikes me a bit strange, Nick, I'll admit, for I invariably slit the edge of a letter when opening it, and there would have been no occasion for Oakley to have torn off the flap of the envelope."

"Certainly not," said Nick, with a curious squint.

"He received a letter from Dykeman, moreover, for three consecutive days before he died," Henderson added, more seriously. "It may be, by Jove, that—— Wait! Come this way. We'll try to find one of his letters. Most of such matter is finally consigned to a refuse basket."

Nick accompanied him to one of the wards in the prison hospital, where the search was begun. It was not of long duration, nor was it apparently very profitable.

All that could be found, in fact, was an envelope addressed to Oakley, and the fragment of a flap that had been found near the dead convict's cot.

Nick compared the torn edges of each, however, and he soon proved conclusively that the fragment had been torn from the envelope just discovered.

"See for yourself," said he, showing them to the warden after they had returned to his office and rejoined the physician. "Here is the very envelope from which this fragment was torn."

"Yes, surely," Henderson agreed, gravely inspecting it.

"Notice, too, that the other half of the flap is missing," said Nick. "If not torn off by Oakley, it should still be sticking to the envelope."

"That's true, Nick, also," Henderson admitted.

"But if torn off by Oakley, on the other hand, which seems most probable, why was it not found near his cot, as this half was?" questioned Nick, gazing from one to the other of his hearers.

"By thunder, that's a pertinent question," blurted Henderson, with his jaw dropping perceptibly.

Doctor Wicklow's brows knit until they looked like bushy battlements over his frowning eyes.

"Damn it!" he exclaimed, under his breath. "You don't mean to say, Henderson, that you think Carter may be right? We shall look very fat and rosy, for fair, in that case. The other half of the flap? What do you think became of it, Carter? Do you know where it went?"

"I don't know, not positively—but I think I can guess," Nick said dryly.

"Tell us, then. Hang it, Carter, tell us what you mean."

"I prefer to tell you, Wicklow, when I do know positively," Nick firmly declared, taking his hat from the table and rising to go. "I will keep these scraps of paper, Henderson, with your permission, and you shall hear from me later."

"Certainly, Nick, certainly," Henderson acquiesced, looking exceedingly grave and anxious.

"As for you, Doctor Wicklow, take a friendly tip from me," Nick added, smiling oddly while he opened the office door. "If you have any money to bet—put it on the other horse!"

CHAPTER III.

A GRUESOME DISCOVERY.

Nick Carter did not return home immediately after leaving Sing Sing. He now felt reasonably sure that Edward Eggleston Oakley was alive, that his illness and semblance of death had been accomplished by trickery of the most crafty and subtle kind, and with the help of confederates as capable and resourceful as the convict himself.

It appeared obvious, too, that these knaves felt sure that they had successfully covered their tracks, and were now well guarded against detection and exposure.

"Otherwise they would not have played their game so boldly," thought Nick, while returning to the railway station. "Neither Dykeman nor Doctor Arbuckle have attempted to hide their identity. They appear to have acted openly and aboveboard. They must know, nevertheless, that suspicions might suddenly arise, resulting in an immediate investigation. Can they really have made good? Can they already have covered their tracks so skillfully as to preclude detection?

"If not, by Jove, I must lose no time in getting after them. I will allow them no additional leeway. I'll strike before they can accomplish anything more, if possible. I will tackle Arbuckle right off the reel. In the meantime, too, I will start Patsy after Dykeman, the Yonkers lawyer, and get a line on his movements."

With these intentions in view, Nick entered a pay-station booth in a drug store, and telephoned to his business office. He got Patsy on the wire, stated as briefly as possible what he had learned and of what his suspicions consisted, then quickly gave him such instructions as he then thought would serve his purpose.

It was eight o'clock that evening when Nick Carter arrived in Fordham. He then learned from the station agent that a body had been received soon after noon the previous day, and that it had been removed in a covered wagon belonging to Doctor Arbuckle, and driven by one of the men employed at his sanitarium. All this appeared equally open and aboveboard, quite as if the suspected men had absolutely nothing to conceal.

Nick also learned from the station agent the precise location of the physician's establishment, which was in one

of the hilly, woodland districts nearly a mile outside of the town.

"You'd better take a carriage," advised the agent. "The place is quite isolated, and you might not be able to find it after dark. The nearest house is a quarter mile away."

"Who occupies that house?" Nick inquired.

"A man named Caleb Hoxie. He raises farm products for the local market."

Nick sauntered out of the station and accosted a hackman.

"Do you know where Caleb Hoxie lives?" he inquired.

"Sure thing, sir," vouchsafed the cabby.

"Take me out there," Nick directed. "Wait a moment and I'll pay you in advance. Drop me about fifty yards from Hoxie's house."

"All right, sir. I've got you."

"I will have a look at Arbuckle's place before entering," thought Nick, after seating himself in the carriage. "There may be something doing, perhaps, which would be immediately cut short if a carriage was heard approaching. I'll foot the quarter mile, therefore, and see what I can discover."

It was half past eight when the carriage slowed down near the Hoxie dwelling. Nick alighted and gazed around, remarking carelessly:

"I shall not return, cabby, so you need not wait. By the way, isn't there a hospital, or sanitarium, somewhere in this section?"

"Yes, sir," said the hackman, pointing. "You mean Doctor Arbuckle's place. Follow this road around the curve, then take the first road to the left. That's a private road, and it leads into the sanitarium grounds."

"Very good," said Nick. "I was told there is such an institution out this way."

"That's the one, sir."

"My business is with Hoxie, however," added Nick, turning to walk toward the latter's house, as if he had no intentions of visiting the sanitarium—a step taken only to head off any disclosures to Doctor Arbuckle, in case anything led him to defer an interview with the physician.

Nick watched the departing carriage until it disappeared from view, then set out with rapid strides along the suburban road in the direction indicated.

It was a fit time for a night espionage, and such work as that which was engaging him. The lonely highway appeared to be deserted. Only a single light could be seen in the windows of the Hoxie dwelling. The stars were partly hidden by great banks of rolling clouds, between which they appeared only at intervals, dimly revealing the gray road and more gloomy landscape on either side. A fitful wind was sighing through the trees, as if lamenting the gruesome mission of this solitary pedestrian.

Five minutes brought Nick to the diverging road, that leading to Doctor Arbuckle's sanitarium, and he then could see the distant lights through the trees, obviously the illumined windows of a dwelling of considerable size, the outlines of which presently came into view.

Off to the east, and somewhat back of the larger edifice, were several smaller buildings, including a stable, a carriage house, and a garage, all appearing only dim and indistinct against the background of wooded hills.

Nick saw that a front hall and office were lighted, but he could discover no one within, nor did he at once approach to make his presence known.

Instead, following a path diverging from the driveway, and leading toward the west side of the house, Nick presently came in sight of a rear wing, or annex, the appearance of which aroused his curiosity.

It was a low structure of brick, with a sloping slate roof and a large square chimney rising from the end farthest from the house. There were two windows in the wall at which Nick paused to gaze, and he could see that the interior of the low annex, the use of which he could not then conjecture, was dimly lighted. He also noted that the roller shades were attached to the bottom of the casings, each curtain rolling upward by means of a cord run through a catch pulley at the top of the window.

One curtain was drawn completely up, precluding any view from outside. The other was caught about six inches from the top of the window, which was also open nearly as wide at the top, evidently for ventilation.

"I might learn who is in there, or what, if I can find a ladder, or something on which to stand," thought Nick, approaching to gaze at the opening at the top of the window. "It's good ten feet from the ground. These panes are of ground glass, too, by Jove, evidently to preclude inquisitive persons from looking in by daylight. Looking in at what, I wonder. If I—— Ah, I have it. That will fill the bill."

Glancing back after vainly listening for any sounds from within, Nick discovered a large tree some ten feet from the window, the lowest branches of which overhung the annex roof. It took him about half a minute to climb to one of the branches, from which he then could see through the opening at the top of the window.

A long room with a smooth cement floor met his gaze. The one wall that he could see from his ticklish perch was shelved nearly to the ceiling. On the shelves was a vast array of jugs, bottles, vials, carboys, retorts, test tubes, and other paraphernalia required in a chemical laboratory.

In one corner of the room was a surgeon's operating table. On a stand near by were numerous surgical instruments, scalpels, saws, and dissecting knives.

Something of far more significance, however, quickly claimed his attention.

From the middle of the ceiling hung a hooded chandelier, the dim light from which was shed down upon a low, zinc-covered table, revealing with gruesome suggestiveness a white sheet—with something under it.

There was no mistaking what it was.

Every quiescent fold of the white covering, every motionless protuberance, every curve and line of the rigid figure, told the dismal story.

It was a covered body on the dissecting table.

Nick Carter was not shocked, nor even startled. This was the very thing he had hoped to see, that he had come there chiefly to find. He had not expected to discover it before entering the house, however, and very possibly not at all.

"Doctor Arbuckle's laboratory, operating and dissecting room," he said to himself. "By Jove, I am in time to accomplish my object. That should be the body that was brought here yesterday. Is it Oakley's body? If so, I can positively identify it. If not his, I can quickly obtain equally positive proof of it."

Nick dropped to the ground, and took a small sheet of white paper from his notebook, taking care to finger only one corner of it. It was specially prepared by a process of his own, and for the purpose he then had in view—

that of taking finger-print impressions on the waxy surface of one side of it. He always carried a few of these blank sheets between the leaves of his notebook.

Nick shrewdly reasoned that illness might have so changed Oakley's face and features that he could not positively identify him, if dead, or even if under the suspected abnormal conditions.

He knew, however, that the convict's fingers would not have undergone any material change, and that the prints of them still should correspond exactly with those on file in the police headquarters taken after Oakley's arrest.

It was to positively identify the body by recognition, or to stealthily obtain the finger prints of the corpse, enabling him to settle the question with absolute certainty, that Nick had hastened to Doctor Arbuckle's sanitarium that very evening.

Slipping the sheet of paper into his side pocket, he returned to the front of the house and rang the doorbell.

A servant in livery quickly appeared at the door—a stocky, muscular man of thirty, with smoothly shaved features, a thin-lipped mouth, and narrow, searching gray eyes. He looked sharply at Nick in the light in the vestibule, while the detective blandly inquired:

"Is Doctor Arbuckle here this evening?"

"Yes, sir."

"I want an interview with him."

"I will take in your card, sir, or your name."

"I don't happen to have a card. Say to him that——"

"I will see the gentleman, Morgan," called a voice from one of the rooms. "Show him in."

"This way," said Morgan, without a change of countenance.

Nick entered and followed him to the door of a well-furnished library, adjoining both the business office of the physician and the main hall of the extensive house.

From an opposite rear parlor came the music of a softly played organ, and the voices of women in quiet conversation. There was an atmosphere of culture and refinement that would, to any ordinary detective, have seemed utterly inconsistent with crime, but Nick Carter never allowed himself to be influenced, much less blinded, by outward appearances.

Doctor Arbuckle was seated in an armchair near the library table. He was a somewhat imposing man of fifty, with a strong, determined face and penetrating blue eyes, a face plainly denoting mental vigor, and an aggressive nature, though the latter was somewhat softened by an affected professional suavity. He laid aside the book he was reading when the detective appeared, saying, with a wave of his hand:

"Walk in, sir, and take a chair. I heard you ring, and what you said to my butler. Close the door, Morgan, when you go out."

"Yes, sir," said Morgan, with a bow.

Doctor Arbuckle gazed at Nick again, and added:

"Now, then, what can I do for you, Mr.——"

"My name is Carter—Nicholas Carter."

"The detective?"

"Yes."

"Ah, is that so?" The physician smiled agreeably, with his brows lifted. "I have heard of you, Mr. Carter, but do not recall having seen you before. What is the trouble, sir, that you favor me with a visit? You do not look like a man physically off color, nor mentally."

"Nor am I," said Nick. "My business relates to another matter, Doctor Arbuckle."

"Yes?"

"Quite another matter."

"To what, Mr. Carter?"

"I want to know, Doctor Arbuckle, under precisely what circumstances you obtained the corpse of a convict who died in Sing Sing two days ago," said Nick. "As you know, of course, I refer to the remains of Edward Eggleston Oakely."

"Certainly," said Doctor Arbuckle. "I know all about it, Mr. Carter, though I do not see why you feel any interest in the matter. Be that as it may, however," he added, before Nick could reply, "I will be glad to give you any information you desire, or to answer any question you wish to ask. I am not aware of anything wrong, or illegal, in the matter. Do you suspect something of the kind?"

"Well, possibly," Nick admitted.

"Why so?"

"I am never without suspicions, Doctor Arbuckle, under such extraordinary circumstances," said Nick, steadfastly regarding his hearer.

"You are right in some cases, no doubt, but not in this one," Doctor Arbuckle replied, apparently unruffled.

"I hope not, I'm sure."

"There is nothing to conceal, in so far as my relations with Oakley are concerned, or my conduct since his death," Doctor Arbuckle complacently asserted. "I had a business agreement with him, pure and simple, that I should have his body, and I——"

"One moment," Nick interposed. "What led Oakley to enter into such an agreement with you?"

"That may be told with a breath. Oakley and I were very good friends. I knew nothing about his crimes at that time. We frequently met in town, and dined together quite often."

"How long ago was that?"

"For several years, Mr. Carter, and up to the time of his arrest."

"Continue."

"He was interested in my professional work as a brain specialist, and we frequently discussed the subject," proceeded the physician. "On one of those occasions I happened to remark that I had great difficulty in getting as many bodies as I wanted for dissection and study. Oakley laughed, and said he would give me his, instead of leaving directions that it should be cremated, as had been his intention."

"H'm, I see," said Nick.

"I protested at first, of course, but he insisted that it would be a much better use than to burn it, and he afterward brought me a signed paper to that effect, sworn to before a notary. That is all there was to it, Mr. Carter, and my statements can easily be verified. The notary will vouch for all that I have said."

Not for a moment had Nick Carter's gaze left the physician's strong, dispassionate face. All this confirmed only what he had suspected—that this man felt sure of himself and the position he had taken.

"Are you in the habit, Doctor Arbuckle, of dissecting the remains of your personal friends?" Nick inquired.

"No, indeed," said the physician. "But for one reason, Mr. Carter, I never would have presented my claim upon Ned Oakley's corpse."

"What reason, Doctor Arbuckle?"

"After learning of his crimes and the double life he had led, and knowing him to be a man of great mental capacity, I really wanted to examine his brain with a view to learning, if possible, whether it presented any organic abnormalities that might have occasioned his strangely incongruous conduct," Doctor Arbuckle blandly explained. "Upon learning of his death, therefore, I presented my claim and received the body. That is the whole story, the whole truth, Mr. Carter; but if you suspect anything under the surface—you may go ahead and dig it out. You soon will find that you are delving in barren soil."

There was a subtle ring of defiance in Doctor Arbuckle's voice when he concluded, but his grave countenance underwent no change, nor the cold glint of his steel-blue eyes. In other words, he appeared as if ready to meet the detective halfway in any kind of a contest.

Nick Carter appeared oblivious to the physician's momentary display of feeling. He drew up in his chair and replied:

"I have no inclination to do more than my duty imposes upon me, Doctor Arbuckle. You received Oakley's body yesterday morning, I believe?"

"Yes."

"And brought it here?"

"Certainly."

"What has become of it?"

"It is in my operating room in the annex."

"May I see it?"

Doctor Arbuckle hesitated for a moment. He gazed doubtfully at Nick, saying slowly:

"Are you quite sure after what I have said that you really wish to see it? You may not find it as—— But what matters?" he broke off abruptly, then added, rising from his chair: "Certainly, Mr. Carter, you may see it. I said in the beginning that I would give you any information I possessed. Come this way, sir. We must go through the rear hall to reach the annex. That is a part of the house in which I allow none of my patients, servants, or any other intruders. Only a few students and fellow practitioners ever enter it. You shall be an exception. This way, Mr. Carter."

Nick followed him without replying.

He was led through a brick passageway and into the dimly lighted room already partly described.

As they entered it, Doctor Arbuckle turned a switch on the wall and a flood of light from the hooded chandelier leaped down upon the gruesome object on the zinc-covered table.

Unobserved, Nick took the scrap of paper from his pocket and held it concealed in the palm of his hand. His design was to grasp the hand of the corpse suddenly and thus stealthily get the finger prints.

Doctor Arbuckle approached the table and removed the sheet that covered the body.

Nick Carter felt an unexpected chill run down his spine.

The body had been decapitated and partly dismembered.

The head was missing.

Both arms were gone.

Nick Carter might as well have had a scrap of newspaper in the palm of his hand.

Doctor Arbuckle gazed at him with a sinister gleam in his eyes.

"I ought to have told you, perhaps, that I already have made a study of Oakley's brain," he said coldly. "I should have done so, Mr. Carter, and spared you this repulsive scene, if I had known you would not misinterpret my objections."

Nick regarded him with ominous austerity.

"Where is the head?" he asked.

"The brain is in alcohol in that jar," said Doctor Arbuckle, glancing toward one of the shelves. "On the label pasted on the jar you may read Oakley's name, as well as comments and conclusions resulting from my investigations."

"But the skull and arms of this man—where are they?" Nick sternly demanded.

"They have been destroyed. They have gone where the rest of the body will go, Mr. Carter, after I have ended my work. There!"

Doctor Arbuckle turned and pointed to a crematory near the outer end of the room.

CHAPTER IV.

HOW NICK SIZED IT UP.

Nick Carter arrived home at eleven o'clock after his sensational experience with Doctor Andrew Arbuckle. He found Chick awaiting him in the library, but Patsy Garvan had not yet returned from Yonkers, nor sent in any report.

Chick needed only to glance at Nick's face to know that something unusual had occurred, and Nick at once sat down and proceeded to tell him all that he had seen and learned since his visit to Sing Sing.

"Great Scott!" Chick exclaimed, after listening without interruptions. "That's the limit, Nick, for fair. Just what do you make of it? Do you still think that Oakley is alive?"

"More than merely think so," Nick replied emphatically. "I now am absolutely sure of it. This whole job was cut and dried, carefully planned long before Oakley was caught and convicted."

"Planned with Arbuckle and Dykeman?"

"With Doctor Arbuckle, at least, and very probably with the lawyer. Arbuckle is the man behind the gun, however, the one who made the job possible."

"How so?"

"By providing the ingredient, the drug, or whatever it was, that produced in Oakley the symptoms of illness and semblance of death that completely deceived Doctor Wicklow," Nick explained. "That is out of a lawyer's line."

"I see."

"Arbuckle, on the contrary, has a splendidly equipped laboratory, and a profound knowledge of drugs and chemicals, no doubt, including those that have these extraordinary effects upon the human organism. Doctor Arbuckle was, I am sure, the man who framed up the job."

"But what profit can he derive from it?" questioned Chick, a bit doubtful. "Oakley is down and out financially. No reputable physician would take such a risk for nothing, nor for mere friendship's sake."

"That's very true," Nick admitted. "I believe that Oakley, however, is very far from being penniless. You overlook something."

"What is that?"

"Oakley's record previous to his arrest and conviction, while he was secretly posing as Dave Maitland and conducting a swell gambling house. I know positively, Chick,

that no less than five bank clerks were lured there and fleeced out of thousands of dollars. Two of them committed suicide. Three are doing time for embezzlement. Four of the banks were badly crippled by their losses. The question is—what became of all the money?"

"You think Oakley still has it, or knows where it is?"

"I do, Chick, most decidedly. I believe he has it concealed somewhere, or in various safety-deposit drawers under fictitious names."

"Possibly."

"I looked into this matter after his conviction, and I know positively that he did not spend, nor lose in speculation, the vast sums acquired by his knavery, in spite of the fact that he was said to be bankrupt," Nick added. "He ought to have a million, at least, where he now can lay hands on it."

"You think that was Arbuckle's incentive, then, to entering into a scheme to liberate Oakley?"

"Undoubtedly," said Nick. "Naturally, of course, Oakley would not have revealed the whereabouts of the money before obtaining his freedom. His liberation was imperative, therefore, and it was planned long before his exposure and arrest, which he probably foresaw were inevitable sooner or later in spite of his cunning and constant caution."

"By Jove, that appears to be entirely reasonable," said Chick. "If we can round up the rascals and recover the money before they can nail it, it will be a five-foot peacock feather in our hats, for fair."

"That's precisely what we must do," Nick replied. "The defrauded banks would give a fat reward to retrieve part of their losses."

"Surely," Chick agreed. "But how do you size up the whole business? Why was Dykeman rung into this scheme? It could have been pulled off as well by Arbuckle alone."

"You are wrong."

"Why so?"

"Because Arbuckle and the scheme itself would have been very quickly suspected," Nick pointed out. "A middle man was necessary, one not only ignorant of drugs and chemicals, but who also could consistently correspond with a life convict. Only a lawyer would fill that bill."

"You mean——"

"I mean that it was necessary that Doctor Arbuckle should not appear in the matter until he claimed the body, nor to have had any relations with Oakley during his imprisonment."

"I see the point," Chick nodded. "But if the job was entirely planned and all of the details understood before Oakley's arrest, why has Dykeman been writing to him so frequently and pretending to be working for a new trial, or a pardon?"

"He had to have some consistent pretense for writing to him."

"But why write to him at all? What need of that?"

"In order to provide Oakley with the drug, or whatever was used to cause his illness and pretended death."

"How could that have been inclosed in the letters?" Chick asked, still doubtful. "Warden Henderson opened and examined all of them. Surely, Nick, he would have discovered it?"

"Certainly—if the drug had been inclosed in the letters."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, Chick, that an exceedingly crafty method was adopted for providing Oakley at regular intervals with the ingredient that gradually caused his illness and finally his supposed death," said Nick. "Bear in mind that he received a letter from Dykeman on each of the three days preceding his collapse. That was much more often than usual, which convinces me that a greater quantity of the drug was required to completely overcome him and cause the appearance of death. I suspected that, Chick, when Henderson told me about the three letters."

"That's perfectly plain," Chick allowed. "But how was the drug inclosed so that Henderson failed to discover it?"

"It was not inclosed in the letters," Nick replied, taking out his notebook. "Here is one of the envelopes, also half of the flap torn from it. This half was found beside Oakley's cot on the morning he died, or was thought to have died. The other half, though torn from the envelope, was not found. The question is, therefore—where was it?"

"Where do you think it was?"

"I know where it was, Chick, with no reasonable doubt," Nick declared.

"Where?"

"In Oakley's stomach."

"You mean——"

"I mean that the drug was supplied him—in the paste on the flap of each envelope."

"Oh, by thunder!" Chick exclaimed. "Who but you would have thought of it? That calls the turn, Nick, as sure as death and taxes."

"Much more surely, Chick, than Oakley's death," replied Nick, laughing a bit grimly.

"Right you are, Nick, surely."

"I suspected this the moment Henderson told me that the flap had been torn from an envelope already opened by slitting the edge of it."

"Yes, yes, of course," Chick agreed. "It now is as plain as twice two."

"Plainly enough, also, the envelopes were prepared by Doctor Arbuckle and given to Dykeman," Nick continued. "Some powerful drug, or compound, the strange effects of which Arbuckle evidently has discovered, were mixed in proper quantity with the paste on the flap of each envelope."

"I see."

"Oakley tore off the pasted portion, and either swallowed it, or chewed it until the drug was absorbed into his system."

"But that half, Nick; why was it found beside his cot?"

"Probably because he was overcome and lapsed into unconsciousness before he had devoured it. It slipped from his hand and fell to the floor. As I said, the other half undoubtedly was in his stomach."

"By Jove, I guess you are right."

"Luckily, as it happened, we now have this half," Nick added. "I will have Professor Kane, the chemist, subject it to a careful analysis to-morrow. We thus may obtain absolute evidence against the rascals to that extent, at least."

"That will help," Chick predicted. "Now, Nick, about the body you saw in Doctor Arbuckle's laboratory. We must find out where that was obtained, and by whom. Have you any suspicions?"

"Yes."

"Namely?"

"I suspect that the man I saw in the barber shop yesterday afternoon was Dykeman," Nick proceeded. "He

evidently had heard from Arbuckle and knew that the physician had received the body and taken it to his sanitarium, where Oakley probably was quickly revived by means of an antidote."

"Another body, then, was needed to take his place."

"Certainly, in event of suspicion and an immediate investigation?"

"Exactly."

"One already had been provided, and evidently was in the keeping of the two men to whom Dykeman telephoned from the barber shop," Nick continued. "One was called Joey. The other was referred to as the digger, also called Dig, presumably a nickname."

"A very suggestive one, Nick, under the circumstances."

"Decidedly so," said Nick. "He may be a gravedigger, or a rascal who robs graves to supply medical students, or unscrupulous physicians, with bodies for dissection."

"In other words, Nick, a body snatcher."

"Exactly."

"By Jove, then, this rat must be rounded up with the others," Chick declared, with a grimace.

"Take my word for it, Chick, he shall be," Nick forcibly asserted. "Now to go a step farther, Dykeman telephoned to two men and directed them to deliver the body last night. That was the meat to which he referred. It was done, of course, and the body I saw was not that of Oakley, but of some unknown man who has recently died, and whose body was in some way obtained for this knavery."

"Undoubtedly."

"Having received it in his laboratory, where it must have been stealthily delivered last night, Arbuckle lost no time in removing the head and arms, in order to preclude an exposure of the fraud, in event of an immediate investigation."

"That was his game, all right," said Chick. "The rascal was shrewd enough to foresee, moreover, that it might be exposed by the finger prints of the body. That's why he removed and destroyed the arms, as well as the head."

"Precisely."

"He certainly is a crafty scoundrel."

"All of that," said Nick. "He also is a remarkably cool and confident one. That appeared in his talk with me this evening, and in the determined position he has taken. He feels absolutely sure of himself, sure that the fraud cannot be proved, and he is banking on getting by on his good reputation."

"Did you charge him flatfooted with the fraud?"

"No, indeed."

"Why not?"

"There would have been nothing in it," said Nick. "He had destroyed the only evidence on which I then was depending, the head and hands of the body. He had me at a disadvantage, and he well knew it. I could read that in his eyes, detect it in the mocking assurance with which he discussed the matter."

"What did you finally do?" Chick inquired.

"I pretended to accept his explanations, and to believe what he told me," said Nick, smiling grimly. "I had no wise alternative, in fact, but to defer charging him with the crime until I can find positive and tangible proof of it."

"That's right, too."

"The dismembered and decapitated corpse, however, does not supply it," Nick pointedly added.

"Certainly not."

"Furthermore, Doctor Arbuckle has still in his possession, no doubt, the prison garments worn by Oakley when his supposed corpse was delivered to the physician. He reasons correctly, Chick, that it will be very difficult, if not wholly impossible, for us to prove that the corpse is not that of the convict."

"By Jove, there is a good deal of truth in all that, Nick, under these extraordinary circumstances," Chick said gravely. "How are we to accomplish it?"

"We must find Oakley."

"That would settle it."

"Or, if unable to find him, we must contrive to discover the two rascals who supplied Doctor Arbuckle with the body," said Nick. "We must find out whose body it is, as well as where and how it was obtained."

"We then could show, at least, that the body is not that of the convict?"

"Exactly."

"What are your plans?" Chick inquired.

"I have not definitely decided," Nick replied, knocking the ashes from a cigar he had lighted. "It's not enough that we entertain these suspicions. We must find positive and tangible evidence in support of them. Oakley will lie low in quarters felt to be safe, of course, or possibly make a successful attempt to get out of the country."

"Very likely."

"We may not be able to locate him for some little time, therefore, if at all," Nick went on. "Nor will it be easy to show that such relations as we suspect have existed between Dykeman and Doctor Arbuckle, that they are confederates in any such scheme. Knowing the risk they were about to take, they will have been very circumspect in all of their doings."

"Surely," Chick agreed. "They will have tried to anticipate every peg on which to hang a suspicion."

"Undoubtedly. Dealing with knaves of their caliber, therefore, we may not find it easy sledding to clinch this case and dump them into the dough dish," Nick said, a bit grimly. "But it has got to be done, Chick, and it's up to us to do it."

"There's no getting around that, Nick."

"We may get something of importance from Patsy when he returns from Yonkers," Nick added. "He has been far from idle, Chick, or he would have reported by telephone, at least, by this time."

"No doubt. That would have taken only a few minutes. He must, as you infer, have found something doing."

"We'll wait for his report, then. There is, at present, nothing more that we can do."

CHAPTER V.

CONFLICTING CURRENTS.

Patsy Garvan, as Nick Carter had remarked, had been far from idle while his chief was engaged as described. It was nearly six o'clock when he arrived in Yonkers, and set about looking up Donald Dykeman, as Nick had directed.

Patsy met with immediate success, moreover, in that he discovered the lawyer just leaving his business office, the location of which Patsy had quickly learned. He saw at a glance, too, that this was the man whom Nick had seen in the barber shop, of whom Patsy had been given a description.

"Gee! I've nailed him right off the reel," he thought, congratulating himself in characteristic terms. "There's

nothing to it, now, but to keep an eye on his doings. That's what the chief directed, and what he says goes. He evidently thinks the lawyer will communicate with the sawbones, or go to see him, and he wants me to get wise to all that comes off. That looks like soft walking, now that I've picked up my quarry. He must be heading home for dinner."

Patsy was right to that extent, but the work cut out for him that evening was not what he expected.

The lawyer appeared to have no misgivings, no burden on his mind, no thought of being the victim of an espionage. He walked leisurely to an attractive wooden residence in a desirable outskirt of the town, entering it with a key, and leaving Patsy to size up the place from around a near corner.

The house was somewhat back from the street, with neatly kept grounds surrounding it, and with only a boxwood hedge dividing the estate from those adjoining it.

"That's where he lives, all right, but I can accomplish nothing more until after dark, unless he cuts loose with a move of some kind," thought Patsy. "That is not likely, however, if he has come home to dine. I'll lie low and wait for darkness. He'd be sure to see me, now, if I ventured into his grounds."

Patsy had not long to wait. The sun had set, and daylight soon gave way to dusk and steadily increasing darkness.

Lights appeared in the lawyer's dwelling, and Patsy stole into an adjoining estate, and found under one of the hedges a concealment from which he could see through the windows of the lighted rooms.

"The dining room and library," he said to himself. "There's Dykeman at dinner with his wife and two children. This does look, by Jove, as if there would be nothing doing. He certainly is in no hurry to reach nuts and raisins."

What followed during another hour seemed to confirm Patsy's negative suspicions. The lawyer arose from the table and entered the library, where he sat down in an armchair and began reading an evening newspaper. His wife and children joined him a little later, remaining nearly an hour, and then the children and their mother went up to one of the front chambers.

Ten minutes later the newspaper fell upon Dykeman's knees, and his head dropped back against the cushioned chair. The lawyer had fallen asleep.

"Gee! that *does* settle it," thought Patsy, who could see quite plainly through the lace-draped windows. "He has no intention of going out, nor of phoning to any one. It's odds, too, that he is not expecting any visitors, or he——"

Patsy's train of thought ended as abruptly as it had begun. A figure, moving in the quiet and otherwise deserted street, suddenly caught his eye—the figure of a woman.

She had stopped near one corner of the lawyer's estate and was gazing at his lighted windows. She was clad in a dark cloak and her face was partly veiled, but she appeared to be young, while her immediate movements denoted that her mission there was not an ordinary one.

After briefly watching the lighted windows on both floors, she glanced sharply up and down the street, then stole quickly across the lawn and peered into the library, crouching to hide her figure from the light within. For half a minute she remained watching the dozing lawyer, then lifted her veil and knocked gently on the window.

The sound awoke Dykeman. He started up in his chair as if suddenly electrified, and gazed apprehensively toward the window.

Then, for the first time, Patsy saw the woman's face distinctly—and he immediately recognized her.

"Holy smoke!" he muttered, watching her over the hedge. "Lena Gervais, as sure as I'm a foot high. Why the dickens is she here? How does she fit into the case?"

Though he immediately recognized her, Patsy knew Lena Gervais only by sight, name, and reputation, which was very far from being an enviable one. He knew, too, that she had been very friendly with Vesta Deland, the unscrupulous beauty then in prison for complicity with Oakley in his gambling game and the murder of one of his victims. Quite naturally, therefore, Patsy leaped to a quick conclusion—that Lena Gervais had had a hand in liberating Oakley from Sing Sing, and that she had now called to confer with Oakley's lawyer.

"No, by thunder, I'm wrong!" he muttered, as quickly reversing his opinion. "Dykeman is puzzled and does not recognize her."

The lawyer had approached the window and drawn aside the draperies. Peering out at the woman, his austere, dark face evinced no sign of recognition.

Lena Gervais pointed to a near side door, signifying that she wanted to enter, and at the same time touched her lips with one forefinger to show that she desired a private interview.

Dykeman evidently understood her to that extent, though manifestly perplexed by her visit. He hastened to admit her, nevertheless, and led her into the library, closing the hall door.

"Gee! that beats me," thought Patsy. "He certainly would know her, if she played any part in getting Oakley out of Sing Sing. She lives somewhere in Harlem. What secret business can she have, then, with this Yonkers lawyer? By Jove, I'll make a bid to find out."

Dykeman had lowered the roller shades after admitting the girl, who, in reality had only turned twenty, though she was matured enough in folly and vice, long having been a figure in various quarters of the Tenderloin.

A streak of light under one of the shades, nevertheless, told Patsy that a view could still be obtained from a nearer point, and he sprang over the hedge and stole across the lawn, then crouched directly under the closed window and peered in at the couple.

Lena Gervais sat confronting the lawyer, with her hands on her knees, with her lithe, sinuous figure bent toward him, and with a look of mocking determination on her rouged face.

That of the lawyer had undergone a remarkable change. He had turned very pale. His every feature appeared as hard as flint. His sunken black eyes had a threatening gleam under his beetling brows. His hands were tightly clenched, his figure rigid.

"Great guns!" thought Patsy, listening for one of them to speak. "What does this mean? Dykeman looks as if he had heard his death warrant. Why is——"

Patsy's mental queries were ended then and there. He turned abruptly, shrinking from the window before hearing a word from the couple within. He suddenly heard, instead, the subdued voices of two men approaching around a corner of the house.

"Tread quiet, Joey. I'll lamp one of the side windows and find out if he's alone."

"Go ahead, Digger. I'm at your heels."

Patsy Garvan waited to hear no more. The names mentioned, together with what he had just seen, told him that the ball had opened in earnest. As quick as a flash he darted to a vine-covered trellis near the side steps and dropped flat on the ground behind it. This move was made none too quickly. The two men already were rounding the corner of the house, from which they crept stealthily toward the window from which Patsy had so hurriedly retreated.

Pausing briefly, both listened intently, evidently hearing voices within, though they were inaudible to Patsy. One laid his finger on his lips, warning the other to be silent. Both then crept to the window, crouching beneath it to gaze in and listen, and the light from under the roller shade fell upon their faces.

Both were stocky, muscular men in the twenties, one a swarthy, black-eyed chap, the other a florid fellow, with red hair, and both wore the hangdog, sinister look of the low-class crook and criminal. They were clad a bit roughly, with soft felt hats drawn over their brows, and Patsy Garvan needed only a glance at them to get their measure, though he knew neither of them by sight.

"A couple of bad eggs, all right," he said to himself, watching them from his concealment. "The two rats to whom Dykeman phoned from the barber shop. They are here to see him, but they showed up too soon to suit me. I'd give something to know what that fly jade was saying to the lawyer that turned him so white and threatening. She is still handing it to him, too, by the looks of these fellows."

Ominous scowls had settled on the faces of the two listening ruffians. Plainly enough, what they heard was not to their liking. Not a sound from within reached Patsy's ears, however, and he could only watch and wait.

For nearly ten minutes the two men remained listening, with frequent expressive glances at one another, the significance of which Patsy could only conjecture. The darker of the two then whispered a few words to his compaion. The latter then crept away, and Patsy presently saw him running at top speed down the street.

"There's something doing, by Jove, but I'm blessed if I can quite fathom it," he said to himself, while watching the remaining eavesdropper. "Dykeman did not recognize Lena Gervais. I'm dead sure of that. She told something to him, nevertheless, that took all of the ginger out of his spice box. Then these two duffers showed up and evidently intended to call on the lawyer, if they found him alone, and now one of them has bolted. It must be because of what they have overheard. But what was it, and what's their game. Gee! there's only one way for me to find out, and that's by seeing the mill to a finish."

Patsy continued to wait, watching and vainly listening, striving with strained ears to catch even a single word from the couple in the library. He was too far from the window to hear their voices, even.

The spy, crouching beneath it, heard all, however, and he did not stir from his position.

Five minutes passed.

Patsy then heard the ringing of a telephone in the library, also Dykeman's heavy tread when he crossed the room to answer the call.

The hangdog face of the spy changed quickly, taking on a look of grim satisfaction.

"Gee! I have it," thought Patsy. "He saw the telephone in the room. He sent the other thug to ring up Dykeman and tell him they are outside. Lena Gervais must have got wise to their Sing Sing job, and has now started in to blackmail them. She's capable of it, all right. In that case, by Jove, these two rascals may try to croak the girl, or get the best of her in some way. I'll balk that job, all right, by Jove, if it takes a leg. Ah, the telephone talk has ended. What will come next?"

Patsy heard Dykeman's footsteps when he returned to his chair.

The spy at the window had not stirred.

His confederate did not return.

Five more minutes passed, then Patsy heard steps in the near hall, quickly followed by the opening of the side door.

Crouching close against the trellis he peered through the vines concealing him and saw Lena Gervais come out on the steps. She turned and faced the lawyer for a moment, who was saying, with a complacency given the lie by the gleam deep down in his sunken eyes:

"It will be all right, my girl, if you do what you have agreed. I'll see that you get yours."

"That's all I want," returned Lena Gervais, gazing at him. "I'll do my part. You do yours, Mr. Dykeman, and there'll be nothing more to it. If you don't——"

"There is no such alternative," Dykeman interrupted, waving her down the steps. "We will leave it in that way."

"That way suits me," retorted the girl, before turning to go.

Patsy glanced toward the window.

The eavesdropper had disappeared.

Lena Gervais drew down her veil and hastened to the street, then walked rapidly away.

Patsy heard Dykeman close the side door and return to the library. He stole out and across the lawn, leaped over the low hedge, darted back of the two nearest dwellings and to a rear gate—through which he again caught sight of Lena Gervais just as she was turning an opposite corner.

CHAPTER VI.

PATSY'S SUBTERFUGE.

Lena Gervis was not the only person seen by Patsy Garvan. He also discovered Digger, so called, stealing after the girl, evidently bent upon trailing her to cover, if not with more sanguinary designs.

This did not surprise Patsy. He had suspected Digger of having sent his companion to telephone to Dykeman, informing him that they would look after the girl, and Patsy was not surprised when Joey also put in an appearance, darting out of a near front yard to rejoin his confederate.

"Good enough! I now have both under my eye, and know what I'm up against," he said to himself. "I'll find out what their game is, all right, and more to go with it. I must send word to the chief, too, by Jove, in event of any slip-up. I can hit a phone, mebbe, a little later."

It then was eight o'clock, just as Nick Carter was arriving in Fordham on his way to Doctor Arbuckle's sani-

tarium. Patsy knew nothing about that, however, nor did he anticipate what Nick afterward discovered.

He shadowed Lena Gervais and her two pursuers to the station of the rapid-transit line to New York, where the girl boarded a train to the city. Mingling with the numerous passengers outside, Patsy watched her through the windows until she was seated, noting that the seat beside her was unoccupied, and that the two men had taken the fourth seat behind her on the opposite side of the car.

"There's no knowing what may happen later," thought Patsy. "I may get in wrong somehow, in spite of myself, so I'll put the girl wise to her danger, at least, instead of leaving her at the mercy of those two rats. I can do so without betraying myself in any way, and it may save her neck and queer the designs of these rascals. Mebbe, too, she'll put me wise to her game and invite me to take a hand in it."

Patsy had no great hope of the last, however, for he knew the girl to be keen, crafty, and unscrupulous, and he felt sure that she also was engaged in knavery and not likely to confide in strangers.

Patsy felt equally sure, too, that his own espionage was not suspected, and that he could artfully approach the girl without arousing serious misgivings on the part of her pursuers.

Quickly adjusting a simple disguise, he boarded the front platform of the car just as the train was starting, and followed several other passengers through the aisle. As he approached the seat Lena Gervais occupied, he saw that the two men were likely to observe him, and he pretended to unexpectedly see and recognize the girl. He stopped short, bowing and extending his hand, saying familiarly:

"Why, hello, Lena, how are you? Glad to meet you again. May I take this seat?"

Patsy did not wait for her consent. She had accepted his hand involuntarily, smiling as one will when thus accosted by another, even though not immediately recognized, and he at once sat down beside her, adding in low, quick whispers:

"Get wise. Pretend you know me, Lena, and I'll explain in a moment. There's something doing."

Lena Gervais was quick-witted, and understood on the instant. She laughed and nodded, moving to make room for Patsy, and he knew then that he had successfully fooled the two men, even though they might have felt a momentary suspicion. Knowing, too, that neither could see his face, or that of the girl, save in part profile, Patsy settled back on the seat and said quietly:

"We're all right, now, if you betray no surprise. Talk with me as if we were old friends. I'll put you wise in half a minute."

"I'm wise enough for a starter," said Lena. "I can wait half a minute, all right, but how did you know my name?"

"I've seen you in New York. I'm acquainted with a girl you used to know."

"I used to know?"

"Yes. Leastwise, I've seen you with her."

"What's her monaker?" asked Lena inelegantly.

"Vesta Deland. She got into trouble a while ago, and now——"

"I know all about it. She's a crook and has gone on a vacation. But I'm not that kind, not in her class."

"I know that," said Patsy. "Even if you were, that would cut no ice with me. I spoke to you only to do you a favor."

"Do me a favor?"

"Yes. My name is Jack Granger. I hang out in Brooklyn, and was up to Yonkers on business. Listen, now, and I'll put you wise."

"Come on with it," said Lena. "I'll get you."

"Don't look back, mind you, or you may put me in wrong."

"I'm no bird head. I'll keep my lamps where they belong. What's up?"

"You are being shadowed."

"Shadowed!" Lena echoed, under her breath. "By a gun?"

"No, not a cop," Patsy assured her. "They are a couple of ginks who followed you up the street and into the station. They are four seats back of us on the opposite side."

"How did you get wise?"

"I saw them stealing after you and watching you in the station," Patsy readily explained. "I edged near enough to hear one of them say something about a lawyer, but I could not catch what he said. The other called him Digger, but I did not hear the name of the one who——"

"I know them," Lena Gervais interrupted. "Is the other a red-headed fellow?"

"That's what," said Patsy. "They look like a couple of thugs. I didn't fancy the way they were watching you, so I thought I would warn you."

"I know them," Lena rep[illegible] frowning. "Warn me, eh? Why, I'll slam those two guys into Sing Sing if they get gay with me."

"I feared they had designs upon you."

"Designs be hanged! If they have, young fellow, they can wade right in with bridles off. I'm not afraid of them. I'm obliged to you for telling me about them, all the same."

"Who are they?" questioned Patsy carelessly.

His apparent indifference, however, did not win the girl's confidence. She shook her head, saying quickly:

"Never mind who they are, Mr. Granger. You'd not get fat from knowing that. They'll not put anything over on me. You can gamble on it."

"Perhaps, nevertheless, I had better see you home," Patsy suggested. "They may be more dangerous than you think."

"Well, you may do that, if you like," replied Lena, with a nod of approval. "There might be something doing, after all."

She did not doubt Patsy's story. She remembered the telephone call to which Dykeman responded, also that he appeared relieved after hearing the communication, and she now suspected precisely of what it had consisted.

She did not suspect Patsy, however, though he artfully tried to worm some of the circumstances out of her, in so far as he could do so without betraying himself.

His efforts in that direction proved entirely futile, nevertheless, for Lena Gervais soon insisted upon talking on other subjects, and Patsy saw that further inquiries might arouse her distrust. He dropped the matter, therefore, and laid his plans accordingly.

Nine o'clock found him bidding her good night at the door of an apartment house in Harlem. He had seen the two men shadow them from the train, and he knew that

they then were lurking in an opposite doorway; but the girl had taken his advice, and not once had glanced in their direction.

Patsy parted from her as if they were old friends, then walked rapidly away after she had entered the house, quickly turning a near corner.

"Now, by Jove, to see what the rascals will do," he said to himself, making a quick change in his disguise. "I'll trail them to cover, also, and in the meantime drop the chief a line. Something might detain me, or I might not be able to connect with a phone."

Turning back, Patsy peered cautiously around the corner.

The two crooks were still in the doorway mentioned, evidently discussing the situation and trying to locate Lena Gervais' apartments.

"It's a cinch that they do not suspect me, or they would have followed me," Patsy rightly reasoned. "Now, by Jove, the boot will be on the other leg."

Taking advantage of this delay by the two rascals, Patsy wrote a few lines on a postal card addressed to Nick, stating as tersely as possible what he had learned, as well as what he intended doing.

He scarce had finished it when the two crooks, abruptly leaving the doorway, hastened away in the direction from which they had come.

Patsy stealthily followed them, dropping the postal card in the first letter box that he passed.

Two minutes later he shadowed his quarry through a narrow, dimly lighted street, where they finally brought up at an inferior brick house, into which they quickly vanished.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MAN IN DISGUISE.

Neither the house entered by the two men, nor any of its surroundings, were at all inviting. It was flanked on one side by the bare brick wall of a big brewery. Between this and the house ran a narrow alley, as dark as a pocket, and leading to a small back yard and a miserable little stable.

In the rear was a motley array of old buildings, sheds, and tumble-down dwellings, permeated with a labyrinth of winding passageways and narrow alleys, in which crooks familiar with them could defy pursuit.

Patsy paused and sized up the house. Not a light was visible from in front. None appeared after the two crooks had entered, even, and the dismal street seemed to be deserted.

"They must have gone to one of the back rooms," thought Patsy. "It's not likely that they are remaining in the dark. I'll have a look, at least, now that I've run them to cover."

Hugging the wall of the brewery to avoid observation, he crept into the alley, and quietly picked his way to the back yard.

There he discovered a single lighted window, the flimsy yellow curtain of which was drawn down. Peering between it and the casing, however, Patsy could see part of a small kitchen and hear the voices of its occupants.

The two crooks were seated near a deal table on which an oil lamp was burning. Each had a glass of liquor in his hand, which they deferred drinking only because of their animated discussion with the only person in the room.

This individual was seated in a chair in one corner, a deformed, humpbacked man apparently of fifty, with unkempt hair and beard, bushy brows, and intense, searching eyes, which were fixed upon the faces of his two companions. His seedily clad figure was repulsive, as well as his swarthy countenance.

"How did she know? How could she have learned?" he was asking, with a wolfish snarl. "Did you find out, Daly? Did she tell Dykeman how she discovered it?"

"No, I reckon not," replied the darker man of the two. "They had been talking for a time when we got there."

"She might have told him before we showed up," put in the other. "He could not inform me by telephone, of course, or she would have heard him."

"That's true, Rankin; that's true," growled the humpback. "Are you sure that's where she lives, the house to which you followed her?"

"Digger Daly and Joey Rankin," thought Patsy, intently listening. "I'll fix those two names in my mind."

"Yes, yes, we are dead sure of that, Ned," Digger Daly replied. "She was getting ready for bed when we left for home. We could see her shadow on the window shade. That's where she hangs out, all right."

Patsy Garvan's heart was beating faster. The mention of the humpback's name was like a revelation. It caused Patsy to detect what till then had escaped him. It enabled him to penetrate the masterly disguise, to strip the deformed figure of its uncouth trappings, and to discover despite them the very man he most wanted to find—the convict who had escaped so strangely from Sing Sing scarce two days before.

"It's Oakley, Edward Oakley himself, as sure as I'm standing on two feet," Patsy mentally declared. "Gee! this does settle it, and it put the chief in right, too. I'll not wait for further orders. I'll find a couple of cops and nail these three rascals at once, then take steps to round up the others. If——"

There was, indeed, an alternative.

As Patsy turned from the window, bent upon carrying out his designs with the least possible delay, he found himself confronting a man with a leveled revolver, aimed point-blank at his head.

One glance at him was enough to tell the story. The glow from the lighted window fell full upon his threatening face and the gleaming weapon.

It was the face of the last man whom Patsy would have expected to see then and there—that of Dykeman, the Yonkers lawyer.

"Great guns!" Patsy gasped involuntarily. "You here?"

"One small gun is enough, young fellow," Dykeman said sternly. "Don't invite its contents. Throw up your hands, if you value a whole skin, and give an account of yourself. What are you doing here? Up with them!"

Patsy had no sane alternative. The gleam in the lawyer's eyes was as deadly as that reflected from the leveled weapon. Up went Patsy's hands, and at the same moment he heard the harsh grating of chairs on the kitchen floor, mingled with hurried steps of Oakley and his companions.

They had heard the stern commands of the lawyer, whose voice they immediately recognized, and in another moment all emerged from the back door. Other weapons

leaped into view, while Oakley snarled fiercely, addressing the lawyer:

"What's this, Don? What's the meaning of this?"

"Can't you see what it means?" cried Dykeman. "He's a spy, an eavesdropper, most likely some dick who——"

"Hang it! He's the same fellow we saw with that girl," Digger Daly cut in. "I know his figure and clothing, but he's in a different make-up. He's a dick, all right, as sure as——"

"Silence!" Oakley sternly interrupted. "Get a grip on his wrists, you and Joey, and run him into the house. We'll soon find out who he is and what's doing."

The two ruffians needed no second bidding. Each seized one of Patsy's arms, jerking it behind him, and he was roughly forced into the house by the four men and taken into the kitchen.

"Watch him, Digger," Oakley sharply directed. "Get his guns, Joey, if he has any."

"You leave that to me."

"Aha! Handcuffs, eh? Fasten them on his wrists, Dykeman, hands behind him. Those do settle it. He's a detective, indeed, and I reckon I know him. Ah, I thought so."

Digger Daly and Rankin already had secured Patsy's two revolvers and handcuffed him with the manacles found in his pocket. Quickly approaching him, also, Oakley seized his disguise while speaking, and jerked it from Patsy's face, at once revealing his identity.

"I thought so; I thought so," he repeated vehemently. "Patsy Garvan, eh? One of Nick Carter's kennel of meddlesome hounds. You see, Garvan, that I know you."

"You've got nothing on me in that respect," Patsy curtly retorted. "I know you, also, Mr. Edward Oakley, and sooner or later I'll queer the clever trick by which you escaped from Sing Sing. Take that from me, sir, for all you now have the best of me."

"Sing Sing again—not much!" Oakley harshly answered. "No mortal man shall ever land me there again. I'd sooner make a quick trip into the hereafter. No, no, Garvan, never again!"

"Wait and see," said Patsy, thoroughly disgusted with the sudden turn of affairs.

"How did you happen to corner him?" Oakley demanded, turning to the lawyer. "It's not often that he is caught napping."

"I arrived at the corner just in time to see him watching the house after Joey and Digger entered," Dykeman hurriedly explained. "I saw him steal into the alley, and I tiptoed after him. That's all there was to it."

"No, not all, Dykeman, by a long chalk," replied Oakley, with bitter emphasis. "We must find out what lies back of all this."

"That's more easily said than done," growled Dykeman apprehensively.

"It's not so dark. I think I can see through the ladder," Oakley declared.

"What do you mean?"

"Nick Carter has heard of my supposed death. He doubted it, and he has got after me. It's odds that he has tackled Arbuckle by this time, but Andy is fully prepared to bluff him to a standstill."

"But how did this fellow pick up our trail?" Dykeman demanded, with a threatening stare at Patsy.

"That's equally plain," Oakley forcibly argued. "Carter must have learned that you have been writing to me, and this rat evidently was sent to Yonkers to watch you. He saw the girl visit you, saw Joey and Digger at your window, and when they followed her from the house. He then——"

"Sure thing!" Digger Daly put in quickly. "That's just how 'twas done. He picked up the girl to question her and discover our game."

"But how did she discover it?" Dykeman cut in perplexedly. "How in thunder did she discover it? That's what beats me."

Oakley checked him with a gesture.

"We'll soon find out," he fiercely predicted. "We'll get the girl to-morrow and wring the whole truth from her. Little good it will do her, or Carter, or this infernal rat to have discovered the truth, now that I'm outside of prison walls. Hark you!"

He swung round with features distorted and eyes ablaze, and shook his fist under Patsy Garvan's nose.

"Hark you!" he repeated, glaring at him. "I will wipe you, Nick and Chick Carter, that girl, one and all of you out of existence, before you shall return me to Sing Sing. That's what I'll do, Garvan, and I'll lose no time in doing it."

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE RIGHT TRAIL.

Nick Carter wore a worried look at nine o'clock the following morning. He was pacing to and fro in his study. No word had been received from Patsy Garvan. His postal card had not arrived. It had been dropped too late for the first morning delivery.

"Something has happened to him, Chick," Nick was saying gravely. "He is in wrong, or we surely would have heard from him. He has met with some mishap."

"I agree with you, Nick, though I don't see how he could have gone lame in the simple work you cut out for him," Chick replied. "You directed him only to keep an eye on Dykeman's doings."

"He may have been seen, perhaps and caught by some of Dykeman's confederates."

"Possibly."

"Be that as it may, we can lose no more time in awaiting a communication from him," said Nick decidedly. "We must go at this matter with hammer and tongs, now, and find means with which to drag these rascals up to the ringbolt."

"What are your plans?"

"If, as I suspect, Oakley had a lot of money hidden away when he was arrested, the concealment most likely to have been selected by a man of his cloth was the deposit vault, in one or more of which he may have rented drawers under fictitious names and in disguise."

"That's true, Nick, as far as it goes."

"You must make a flying visit to the best institutions of that kind, therefore, and find out whether any of them has a depositor who has not been seen for more than a year, the period Oakley has been in prison."

"I see the point," Chick nodded. "You think Oakley might be the long-absent depositor."

"Exactly."

"And that he now needs money and may call in the character assumed when he rented the deposit drawer."

"Precisely," said Nick. "Arrange for the detention of any such depositor, therefore, until an investigation can

be made. Also direct that we shall be immediately notified."

"I've got you," said Chick. "I'll take Danny and the touring car, and will cover the ground as quickly as possible."

"Very good," replied Nick approvingly. "You can do so this morning, all right, and rejoin me here in time for lunch."

"Surely."

"I will visit Professor Kane, in the meantime, and have him subject the envelope flap to chemical tests, or a thorough analysis," Nick added. "If I find that the paste on the flap contains a drug, or any such substance as I suspect, I shall have sufficient evidence to warrant arresting Arbuckle and Dykeman."

"That's right, too," Chick declared.

"We'll get a move on at once, therefore, and meet here again in time for lunch."

"Good enough. I'll return not later than one o'clock."

Both detectives had returned at that hour, and both had accomplished the work laid out that morning.

Nick had obtained the evidence he wanted, positive proof that the paste on the envelope flap contained some foreign substance. Professor Kane required another day, nevertheless, to determine by analysis of what the ingredient consisted.

Chick had learned at no less than five of the deposit vaults that a drawer was held by a man of the same description, known in each place as Jason Greenleaf, but whose address then was not known, and who had visited neither institution for more than a year. He had left instructions to have the man questioned, if he put in an appearance, and placed under arrest unless he should satisfactorily establish his identity.

Unexpectedly, however, Nick's plans were materially altered by other information—that conveyed by Patsy's postal card, which had been delayed, and not arrived until late that morning.

It stated, of course, only what Patsy had seen and learned up to the time he parted from Lena Gervais at the door of the apartment house, the street and number of which Patsy had included.

Nick Carter was quick to follow the thread, however, and deduce almost precisely what afterward had occurred.

"There's nothing to it, Chick," he declared. "Patsy trailed the two crooks to cover, then ran against a snag. He now is in the clutches of the rascals."

"It does look so, Nick, for fair."

"It's dead open and shut," Nick insisted.

"But who is Lena Gervais?" questioned Chick perplexedly. "How does she fit into the case? What are her relations with Dykeman?"

"That appears in what Patsy heard the lawyer say to her at his door," Nick replied, glancing again at the card.

"That he would see that she got hers?"

"Exactly. It's as plain as twice two, Chick, that the girl is informed of the whole scheme and went there to threaten Dykeman, unless he agreed to pay her handsomely for her silence."

"By Jove, I guess that's right."

"He evidently consented—but that may have been only a subterfuge."

"You mean?"

"I mean that he may undertake to silence her in another way, a much more effective one."

"By killing her?"

"Exactly," said Nick. "These rascals have gone too far to shrink from bloodshed. They will put the girl away without hesitation, providing they can lure her into their hands, and if sure that she is the only one who can expose them."

"In that case——"

"There's nothing to it. We must lose no time in heading off their designs," Nick interrupted. "Is Danny outside with the car?"

"Yes."

"Come on, then. We'll not wait for lunch. We must catch Lena Gervais before she can make any move that might prove fatal to her. With what we now know, Chick, I think I can wring a full confession from her."

"I'm with you," cried Chick, as both detectives hastened from the house.

Two o'clock found them mounting the apartment-house stairs to the door of Lena Gervais' suite on the second floor.

Repeated knocks on one of the panels brought no response from within.

Nick Carter did not stand upon ceremony. He unlocked the door with a skeleton key and strode into the quite prettily furnished suite. It was in fairly good order, but Lena Gervais was absent.

"She may have gone out to lunch," Chick suggested. "She may return at any moment."

Nick Carter shook his head.

"I have a hunch good and strong, Chick, that she may never return," he replied, looking unusually grave and thoughtful. "These circumstances admit of only one interpretation, that which I have mentioned."

"You think she has gone to keep an appointment with Dykeman."

"That's just what I think."

"And that he made it only with a view to putting her away?"

"Exactly. He probably promised to pay her what she demanded, directing her to meet him somewhere, and she fell for it."

"By Jove, we must find some way of tracing her. If we only knew the names of those two crooks——"

"Stop a bit!" Nick interrupted. "There is one other significant point."

"What is that?"

"How did the girl discover the scheme?" Nick asked argumentatively. "Patsy states that Dykeman did not recognize her.

"She could not have had any previous relations with him, therefore, and it's odds that the two crooks did not know her, since they appear to have shadowed her here to find out where she lives. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that Doctor Arbuckle has been friendly with a girl of her character."

"By Jove, there is something in that," Chick agreed. "That's a pertinent question, for fair. How did the girl discover the scheme?"

"Assuming the points mentioned, Chick, there is only one explanation."

"Namely?"

"There must be a middle link in this chain," Nick forcibly reasoned. "There must be another person involved."

"Ah, I see," Chick nodded. "I get you."

"Lena Gervais may have been acting for another, under the directions of another, a person who in some way could have learned of the scheme and who now is using the girl as a cat's-paw in order to remain in the background."

"By gracious, Nick, this seems more than reasonable."

"Naturally, then, it should be some one who is associated in some way either with Arbuckle or with Dykeman, who was in a position to discover their secret designs."

"Exactly."

"It might be some one in their employ, or a servant in the house of one of them, who might have played the eavesdropper, perhaps, and heard them discussing the scheme."

"As likely as not," Chick agreed, impressed with Nick's rapid reasoning. "It will take time to follow up that thread, however, and learn who might reasonably be suspected."

"True."

"If haste were not so imperative——"

"Stop a bit!" Nick interrupted. "There is a quick way, perhaps."

"A quick way?"

"Yes. By learning with whom Lena Gervais has been associated."

"Ah, I see."

"If with any one in the employ of either man, we can bank almost safely upon having sized up the circumstances correctly, and upon having found the suspect," Nick argued. "We'll question the janitor and inquire of some of the other tenants."

"That's the stuff!" Chick cried. "By Jove, I think the scent is warming up. Who first, Nick?"

"The janitor," Nick replied, leading the way. "He is the most likely to have seen persons coming to visit the girl. We'll go down to the street door and ring him up. I saw on the wall a bell marked janitor."

"Come on, then," said Chick. "Every minute counts."

They closed the door of the suite and hastened down to the main hall of the house. There proved, however, to be no need of ringing up the janitor.

As he was descending the stairs, Nick discovered a letter carrier in the act of removing from a box on the wall the mail that had been dropped by tenants since his previous visit.

"Ah, this man may be able to aid us," he cried. "He may know with whom Lena Gervais has been corresponding. Stop a moment, carrier, if you please. I want a word with you."

The carrier waited.

Nick introduced himself and stated what information he wanted. The result surpassed his anticipations, even, for it at once convinced him that he had hit the nail squarely on the head.

"Well, sir, I know Miss Gervais' hand, all right, and I know one man to whom she writes quite frequently," said the carrier. "She sent him a special-delivery letter this morning. I took it from the box about nine o'clock. It was the only one, sir, and that's why I happened to notice the address."

"Capital!" Nick exclaimed. "To whom was the letter addressed?"

"To Peter Morgan, Arbuckle Sanitarium, Fordham."

"And she has been writing to him quite frequently?" questioned Nick, with eyes lighting.

"Yes, sir," said the carrier. "I reckon they are lovers, if the truth was told."

"When the truth is told, my man, we shall find that they are conspirators, also, unless I am much mistaken." Nick dryly declared, slipping the carrier a bank note. "Take this for your trouble, carrier, and say nothing about my inquiries."

"I'm dumb, Mr. Carter, thank you. Trust me for that."

"Good enough," Nick replied, heading for the touring car in which Danny was waiting. "Now, Chick, we'll cut loose in earnest. Peter Morgan, eh? Doctor Arbuckle's butler. I thought that fellow had a shifty eye when he admitted me last night."

"Ah, you've seen him, then?"

"Yes. Now, Danny, let go for Fordham at top speed and drop us just out of sight from Arbuckle's place. I'll soon find out what kind of wood shingles are made of."

"How do you size it up, Nick?" Chick questioned, as they were speeding away.

"That letter to Morgan this morning?"

"Yes."

"It's as clear as daylight," said Nick confidently. "While venturing to keep her appointment with Dykeman, Lena Gervais suspects possible treachery, and she has provided herself with an anchor to the windward.

"By writing the circumstances to Morgan and telling him where she was going?"

"Yes, Chick, as sure as there are seeds in an apple."

"Morgan, then, must be the rat who discovered the scheme."

"Exactly," said Nick. "And this girl is the rat's running mate. Take it from me—we now have this whole gang dead to rights."

"I think so, too."

"All we require now, Chick, is to arrive at the sanitarium before Morgan leaves the house," Nick added. "I want that special-delivery letter. It must contain the address to which Lena Gervais has gone. That learned—well, the rest should be a walk-over."

CHAPTER IX.

THE GREEN CURTAIN.

It was nearly three o'clock when Nick and Chick alighted from the touring car in the woodland road within a hundred yards of the drive leading into the park and grounds surrounding Doctor Arbuckle's private sanitarium. They were out of view from it, however, and Nick did not delay operations.

"Wait here, Danny," he directed. "There's no telling how soon we may want you."

"I'll be right here when wanted, Mr. Carter, you can bank on that," replied Danny expressively.

"We will steal through these woods to the edge of the sanitarium park, Chick, and try to get sight of the butler," Nick added, leading the way through the shrubbery flanking one side of the road.

"Suppose he is absent?" questioned Chick.

"We must take that risk. He will not be absent, I think, unless Arbuckle is away, too. It may be that he also has gone to join Dykeman and Oakley, if their designs are what I suspect, and that Morgan will have seized the

opportunity to follow him and make sure that the girl comes to no harm."

"In that case——"

"Stop a moment! Lie low."

They had come in sight of a portion of the sanitarium park and driveway. The sound of a moving motor car had fallen upon Nick's ears. In another moment it came into view, a runabout speeding furiously down the long driveway and containing only one person.

The solitary occupant of the flying car was one of the men of whom Nick had just been speaking—Doctor Arbuckle.

"Humph!" Nick ejaculated. "We appear to have arrived in the nick of time. There goes the doctor, Chick."

"By Jove, he's going some," said Chick dryly. "That looks as if he is just setting out on the mission you suspected."

"I would wager something on it," Nick replied, watching the car till it sped through the driveway gate and vanished in the direction of Fordham. "It would have been useless to try to stop him, nor was there anything to be gained by doing so."

"You want the butler, instead."

"Exactly."

"And feel sure he still is in the house?"

"As sure as you're a foot high," Nick said confidently. "He would not venture out on the mission I suspect, Chick, until after Arbuckle had departed. He don't want to be suspected of this blackmail before the girl has landed the boodle. It would cost him his job and the admirable opportunities he now has of learning all that's doing in connection with the case. That's why he is leaving the work to Lena Gervais."

"I guess you are right."

"If your confirmation of it—— Look there!" whispered Nick, pointing.

Peter Morgan had put in an appearance, precisely as Nick was expecting. He was hurrying on foot down the driveway, buttoning the coat he had just put on, and manifesting all the indications of suppressed excitement and extraordinary haste.

"That the butler?" questioned Chick.

"Yes."

"If he——"

"Come this way, and move lively," Nick interrupted, retracing his steps. "We will run back by the way we came and head him off at the end of the private road, where it joins the other."

"Cut loose," said Chick. "I'm with you."

They arrived at the point mentioned half a minute ahead of the hurrying butler, where they paused in the shelter of some shrubbery.

"I'll hold him up," Nick whispered. "You yank his arms behind him and handcuff him."

"Leave that to me," Chick murmured, quickly producing the manacles.

Peter Morgan recoiled with a gasp, when, upon turning from the private road, he saw both detectives step out and confront him.

"Hold on, Morgan," said Nick, grasping him by the collar. "Where are you going?"

"To Fordham," Morgan faltered. "To Fordham to buy some——"

"No, you're not," Nick interrupted. "You are going with us."

"See here! what the devil——"

"No, no, don't be foolish," Nick again cut in, when the staggered man began to struggle when Chick handcuffed him as directed. "You'll only make matters worse, Morgan, by putting up a fight. We are detectives, and you are under arrest."

"Arrest for what?" snapped the butler, pulling himself together.

"For your little game with Lena Gervais."

"Little game—— I don't know what you mean. I don't know what you are talking about."

"Can that stuff!" said Nick bluntly. "We'll proceed to find out what you know about it."

He thrust his hand into Morgan's breast pocket while speaking, and he found what he sought—the special-delivery letter mailed by Lena Gervais early that morning.

"Hang you!" Morgan now snarled fiercely. "Who the devil are you?"

"Nick Carter," said he curtly.

"Nick Carter—oh, thunderation It's all off."

"All off, Morgan, is right."

"But I have done nothing wrong," Morgan began to protest. "I had no hand in the matter you——"

"We'll discuss later how red your hand is," Nick interrupted. "This tells the story, Chick, and shows us the way."

Nick had been rapidly reading the letter written by Lena Gervais, Chick also scanning it over his shoulder. It read as follows:

"DEAR PAL PETE: I saw Dykeman last night, as we had planned, and he wilted like a wet rag when I delivered the goods. Your name was not mentioned, nor shall it be. He agreed to pay me the ten thousand bucks for my silence, but said he must get it either from Oakley or the sawbones.

"I consented to meet him at Rankin's crib at three this afternoon. No. —— —— Street. He promised that he would compel Oakley to have the coin for me by that time.

"This may be only a blind, of course, and they may intend to put something over on me. You must be on hand to show up and call them down, in that case, and save my precious pelt. Wait outside, Pete, and if I don't show up in a reasonable time—well, you get busy, that's all! I'm going to take this chance of getting the coin to-day, and I leave the rest to you. I know you'll be there to hand it to them, if necessary. That's all for now. LENA."

Nick Carter needed nothing more to confirm all of his suspicions. He did not delay to question Morgan. He reasoned that delay might prove costly, and he lost no time in taking the butler to Fordham, where he turned him over to the police.

Then, accompanied by two plain-clothes men from the Fordham station, Nick directed Danny to make a record run to the address given in Lena's note, where the precise location of Joey Rankin's house was quickly learned.

It was half past three when the touring car stopped around a corner of the narrow street. Looking cautiously around the corner, Nick discovered Doctor Arbuckle's runabout in front of the crook's house.

"There should be nothing to it," he remarked, addressing the two plain-clothes men. "You steal around between

the sheds and through the alleys, till you can guard the back of the house. Nail any one who attempts to escape."

"Trust us for that, Nick," replied one.

"I'll allow you three minutes to get there," Nick added, taking out his watch. "Chick and I then will enter the house from in front."

"We've got you."

"Go ahead, then."

The two men vanished into a near alley.

Nick gazed at the second hand of his watch while it sped jerkily around the dial.

Three minutes passed.

"Come on, Chick," said he, glancing at the latter. "We'll soon find out what's doing. The drama is nearly played. All that really remains is the green curtain. We'll ring that down in short order."

"I'm with you, Nick," Chick said simply.

Half a minute brought them close to the house. There was no sign of life at any of the front windows. Most of the curtains were closely drawn.

Nick tiptoed up the narrow wooden steps and listened briefly at the door. He could hear no sound from within. He peered into the keyhole and saw that it contained no key. Taking out a picklock, he quietly inserted it and noiselessly shot the bolt.

"Have a gun ready," he murmured, over his shoulder.

"I'll have two ready," Chick whispered.

Nick quietly opened the door and both detectives stepped into the narrow hall.

It ran straight through the house to the back door. From the last room on the left, the kitchen already described, came the sound of a girl's voice, that of Lena Gervais, saying forcibly:

"Never mind how I got wise to your game. That's neither here nor there, Mr. Dykeman, as I told you last night. It's up to you ginks to make good and hand me the coin, or——"

"Or you will expose us."

"That's what."

Nick glanced at Chick, and his lips expressed two words, though no sound came from them:

"Oakley's voice."

Chick nodded.

Oakley spoke again.

"Why, you jade, do you think we will stand for this?" he sternly demanded. "Do you suppose that we will buy your silence and be left in the dark as to the identity of your confederate, and how you discovered our scheme?"

"You'll have to stand for it," snapped the girl.

"Not by a long chalk!"

"You can't bluff me, nor frighten me."

Nick glanced at Chick again, drawing his revolver, and both crept through the hall.

"Bluff you!" echoed Oakley derisively. "Don't imagine for an instant that this is a bluff. You are playing too bold a game. There is another way by which we can silence you. We will do it, too. You shall tell us the whole business, the whole truth, or——"

"Let me tell it, instead," Nick interrupted, stepping into the room with Chick. "I can tell it, Oakley, in a nutshell."

The scene was about what he had expected.

Oakley, Dykeman, and Doctor Arbuckle sat frowning darkly at the girl, who was defiantly confronting them from near the closed window.

Digger Daly and Rankin stood leaning against the kitchen sink, mute hearers of the bitter altercation, the nature of which was precisely what Nick had suspected.

The stirring scene that followed was of brief duration.

Both Daly and Rankin reached for a weapon.

Dykeman and Arbuckle threw up their hands, quick to see the one wise course.

Oakley uttered a shriek of dismay, however, leaping like a madman toward the window.

Nick Carter reached him with a single bound, hurling the girl aside, and one blow stretched the frantic convict senseless upon the floor. The crash of breaking glass and splintered sashes accompanied his fall, and the two Fordham officers appeared at the broken window.

There was little to it after that. Chick already had awed Rankin and Daly, both shrinking from his leveled weapons, and within five minutes every man of the gang was in irons.

The results of all this, and of all that had preceded it may be briefly stated. Patsy Garvan was found confined in the cellar, from which he was quickly liberated, and Lena Gervais weakened and told all that she knew about the case.

Her story confirmed nearly one and all of Nick Carter's deductions, which already have been stated, and which so completely covered the ground that repetition now is needless. It appeared, however, that Morgan had heard Dykeman and Doctor Arbuckle discussing the plot to liberate Oakley, and had taken advantage of it in the manner described. He and Lena Gervais got away without a sentence, having had no hand in the plot, but the others were given long terms in prison.

Oakley went back to Sing Sing for life. On his person were found the keys to five deposit drawers, in which was found nearly half a million in cash, and the broken-hearted knave then confessed that it was the fruit of his earlier gambling schemes, and in what proportion it belonged to several defrauded banks. It was finally restored to its proper owners, from whom Nick and his assistants received handsome rewards for their splendid work.

THE END.

"The Crystal Maze; or, An Ocean Island Mystery," is the title of the story that you will find in the next issue of this weekly, No. 100, out August 8th. It tells of the mysterious abduction of five girls, and the clever work of Nick Carter and his assistant—Ida Jones— in rescuing them from their abductors.

MAIN LINES OF THE OCEAN.

There are certain well-defined lines of travel, which are now followed by all steamship lines, and which are varied from but slightly, except in case of storm or shipwreck. These lines are five, as follows: 1. The route across the Atlantic, east and west, between Europe and America. 2. The route by the Pacific Ocean to Japan, China, and Australia. 3. The route by the Atlantic Ocean down the east coast of South America and around Cape Horn to Western America and Australasia. 4. The route down the Atlantic and the west coast of Africa, around the Cape of Good Hope to East Africa, Australasia, and the East. 5. The route across the Atlantic, through the Mediterranean Sea, Suez Canal, and Red Sea to India, China, Australia, and Eastern Africa. The number of steamers

traversing these grand routes, and others tributary to them, is estimated to be more than eleven thousand, and does not include coastwise or independent steamers. By these routes every part of the world, with the exception of some portions of the frigid zones and the islands of the Pacific, is rendered accessible.

The Syndicate of Crime

Or, King Nelson's Puzzling Quest.

By HARRIE IRVING HANCOCK.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 88 of NICK CARTER STORIES. If you have not read the preceding chapters, get the back numbers from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER XXXIX.

"SHE DOES NOT REMEMBER."

"Owing to her extreme secrecy," went on King Nelson, not heeding the interruption from behind, "Maria Ramon brought into New York one of the most valuable cargoes that ever ship brought to this country.

"It was not a large package of gems that she carried, for as all or nearly all the diamonds were of the first water, the splendid fortune was not so heavy from a point of weight.

"Acting upon her instructions from her dead master, she went first of all upon landing to a bank. Here there were safety-deposit boxes to rent. She hired one, paying what struck her at the time as an enormous price. The probability is that, through error, she hired the box for a longer period than she really wanted. From the cautious sale of one gem in Brazil, she was well supplied with money.

"In the meantime, Creed had received the letter penned by the hand of the dying Paul Norwell. His first emotion was one of intense amazement. Cupidity succeeded. He began to wonder if there was not some way in which he could transfer this enormous fortune into his own pocket. Such a plan swiftly formed in his brain. He hurriedly took train for Dracut, arriving at Doctor Rockwell's home to learn that the doctor had been out on a round of visits since early morning.

"On the table in the doctor's office, to which Creed was shown by the doctor's housekeeper, were half a dozen letters that had come in the morning mail. As they had come since the doctor's departure, none of them had been opened.

"Left alone, Creed hurriedly ran through the lot. There was one from Brazil, in the well-remembered handwriting of Paul Norwell. Creed quickly seized this, opened it, and found it almost a duplicate of the letter which he had received. He put it in his pocket. An hour later the rascally lawyer left the house, saying that he regretted he could not longer wait for the doctor. And that is why you, sir, never again heard of the matter," turning to Doctor Rockwell, whose face expressed the keenest amazement at what he was hearing.

"The villain! The scoundrel!" broke from the old physician's lips. "But are you sure of this, Mr. Nelson?"

"As sure as I ever was of anything in my life," replied King Nelson. "The letter came up on one steamer earlier than that on which Maria embarked. Creed had, therefore, a few days in which to bring his plans to perfection. Undoubtedly the lawyer intended to meet this simple woman at the steamer's pier, but the craft arrived at New York a little earlier than expected, which deranged that part of Creed's plan.

"The gems stowed away, Marie, with the child in her arms, set out to find Creed's office. When she arrived there, she was informed by a clerk in the outer office that Mr. Creed was engaged, but would soon be at liberty.

"So Maria took a chair and waited. The clerk went out to lunch, leaving her alone. After a little while, there came from an inner office the sound of angry voices, a yell, and the office door flew open. The office boy, pursued by his employer, was trying to escape the latter's wrath.

"But just at the door, Creed caught the office boy, administering several ugly blows about the head. Maria, sitting in a corner unobserved, saw it all. She beheld the look of fiendish temper in Creed's face, saw the whole workings of the countenance of that evil man. Simple as she was, Maria felt that this was not a man to be trusted. As the boy was hauled back into the inner office, and the door closed, Maria, holding the child clasped closer than ever, fled from the office in the building. It was an hour before she ceased trembling. Walking about and about, she at length found lodgings. She determined that she would not again go near Creed, but determined to seek the other executor, Doctor Rockwell, whose address she possessed. Fearful that if the doctor proved to be as evil as the lawyer, harm might come to the child, she left Elsie at the lodgings in care of the landlady, who appeared to be a good and kind woman.

"Then Maria, after making some inquiries, set out to find her way to Dracut and the doctor. While on her way, some accident happened. Just what it was, she does not know, but she was badly hurt—stunned. The nature of the accident can doubtless be established from the police record of the day.

"Whatever the accident was—it must have been a blow on the head—the poor nurse recovered consciousness, but memory was gone. All the past was a blank. The funds found upon her, now fairly depleted, were used to keep her for a while at a hospital, but her condition did not improve. She became a public charge, and was sent to an institution.

"In the meantime Creed heard of his caller whom he had not seen. Some suspicion of the truth dawned upon him. As the days went by, he spent much of his time in quietly seeking out Maria Ramon. It is merciful that he did not succeed. He often went to Dracut, but Doctor Rockwell never spoke of the woman, showing that he knew nothing of the matter.

"And so the years went by. Maria's landlady at first kept the child and reared her. But upon the good woman's death, Elsie, for want of any other home, was sent to a convent. Considerably later, by a strange fatality, Doctor Rockwell, while at the convent, saw the child, took a wonderful fancy to her, and secured permission to adopt her."

"Thank Heaven I was permitted to partly carry out Paul's wishes, even though ignorant of them!" cried the old physician, whose eyes were decidedly wet.

"In the meantime," resumed King Nelson, "no words can picture the despair of Uriah Creed. That one topic

absorbed his mind night and day. Since she had not gone to the other executor, either, Creed believed that Maria Ramon had decamped with child and fortune. At times he even suspected that Doctor Rockwell and the nurse had conspired to defraud him. He haunted Doctor Rockwell at that time, in the hope of catching an unguarded word from the doctor."

"I remember his frequent visits and his strange manner at that time," confirmed Doctor Rockwell.

"Such clews as they were, Creed picked up a few from time to time. He also fell into the bad habit, for a villain, of keeping a sort of diary of his suspicions and his new discoveries. That diary is now in my possession. It was kept back in the hindmost recesses of the lawyer's safe. All the time he was searching for Maria Roma, she was hardly two hours' journey from his office. But he never thought of seeking through the charitable institutions for a woman who had brought with her such a fortune.

"Creed died years later, his overmastering greed still ungratified. In the meantime, Robert Ford, the office boy of yore, had grown to the age of manhood, had been admitted to the bar, and, by means of a will, doubtless forged, succeeded to Uriah Creed's house, office, and practice. It was not long before Ford came in possession of the diary, Paul's letter to Creed, the letter to Doctor Rockwell and other papers.

"As Creed was cursed with that one ruling passion of getting the Norwell diamonds into his possession, so was Ford. Secretly, but systematically, he hunted high and low. In some way he got hold of the clews that led him to the discovery, that, undoubtedly, the waif adopted by Doctor Rockwell, was really the child of Paul and Luisa Norwell. But every trace of the woman Maria was elusive.

"Ford sought to ingratiate himself more than ever into Doctor Rockwell's confidence. Ford would have married Elsie, and then have made bold and open search for the lost diamonds, but he quickly discovered that Elsie would have none of him.

"So he kept up the search for the Ramon woman instead. With rather more acuteness than Creed had possessed, it lately occurred to Ford to begin a most thorough search of the charitable and penal institutions of this and other near-by States.

"A few weeks ago, he actually got trace of Maria. An accidental blow upon the head had restored Maria's memory and sanity. She had been gone from the institution less than forty-eight hours when the matter came to Ford's knowledge.

"He must have haunted the vicinity of Doctor Rockwell's house in Dracut, though of this I cannot speak positively. At the same time, he had other means employed to find out the whereabouts of Maria.

"He found her, decoyed her to his house, and then opened up his wicked campaign with the accumulated latent passion of years. Had he been a trifle more crafty he might have succeeded, but he filled Maria instead with dread and distrust of him. She was helplessly his prisoner. He learned that she had deposited the gems at some bank, that there was a key to the deposit box somewhere, but further than that he could not go in his discoveries.

"In the meantime he became possessed by a fearful dread that in some way Elsie would hear of and claim her property. So incessantly did this dread haunt him that he determined, after inward struggles, to bring about the death of Elsie Rockwell. To aid him in this matter, he employed Ike Crawford."

Ike, who had been listening to the latter part of this recital with drooping jaw and staring eyes, now turned to a ghastly color and emitted such a groan of terror that all eyes were turned to him.

"What's the matter with you?" King Nelson calmly inquired.

"N-nothing," gasped Ike.

"Did you believe that I was in ignorance about any part of the case?"

"I—I don't know anything about it," stammered Ike.

"About what?"

"About—about any part of this case."

"Oh, yes, you do," was the answer, given with a smile so cold that Crawford felt himself more than ever turning to ice.

He tried to recover his color, but with those mocking eyes of the detective coolly searching his face, he became more than ever afraid.

"You're trying to drive me—trying to make me confess!" protested Ike hoarsely.

"Trying to make you confess what?"

Ike tried to speak, but swallowed instead, in a strangling sort of way. He seemed on the point of collapse.

"I'm not trying to make you confess anything," went on the detective. "I don't have to. I know the whole set of circumstances, and you won't annoy me in the least by keeping as silent as you were a while ago."

Then, turning away from Crawford, who looked as if he were wishing for sudden death, King Nelson continued:

"You two, my friends, are familiar enough with this case to know how the plot was carried out; how Ike saw Elsie and persuaded her that her unknown father was alive and in trouble; how Ike induced her to secretly leave home one night to go to that father. You both know what took place in the boat. How Ike strangled the girl——"

"I didn't!" shrieked the wretch. "I tell you I didn't, curse you! It was that sneaking lawyer, Ford, who did it."

"How the girl's feet were weighted, and she was thrown over into the Hudson."

"It's a lie, I tell you!" roared Ike. "I'm ready to go onto the stand and swear that it was Ford who killed the girl."

"What would be the use?" asked Nelson, with pretended indifference. "I'm not guessing at what I say. I'm prepared to prove every word."

"You have Maria Ramon here in the house," broke in Doctor Rockwell. "You have been talking with her. To what bank did she take the diamonds for deposit?"

"She does not remember," answered Nelson, facing the doctor, while Ike writhed in an agony of fear. "I tried long and patiently to get her to think. During her recent troubles the name of the bank has entirely escaped her. But she is confident that in time she will remember. She has also forgotten what she did with the key that opens the vault. This, too, she hopes to remember ere long.

Facing around again, and looking with cool contempt at Ike, the detective asked:

"Crawford, how do you like the idea of what you see before you? How will you enjoy being tried by a jury, hearing the evidence pile up against you until it results in a verdict of guilty of murder, leading, as that verdict does, to the electric chair at Sing Sing?"

"Will you stop?" shrieked the strangler. "I tell you I never did it!"

"Let us see what you did do, then," replied the detective. Turning in his chair, he pulled aside the curtain behind him.

As he did so, Elsie Rockwell, leaning upon the arm of Blanche Strull, stepped out into the room before the incredulous eyes of the strangler.

CHAPTER XL.

EIGHT MILLIONS.

It was an awful moment for Ike Crawford. He stared at this girl, whom he believed dead, with incredulous eyes. In the next moment he collapsed in the chair, weak and seemingly on the verge of fainting.

"Brace up! Be a man!" broke in the cold, incisive voice of Nelson. "Are you disappointed at finding alive the girl for whose murder you came so near being guilty?"

"Is she alive?" moaned Ike.

"Of course she is, you cowardly, stupid fellow. You see how well you did your work. Would that all murderers might fail as completely as you did!"

Vance Malloy's attitude during the whole recital had been a peculiar one. Though he was charged with being a member of the Syndicate of Crime that was being unmasked, he had worn all along an air of polite but not excessive interest. One might have supposed that he was a mere casual auditor.

But as he glanced from Elsie to Blanche, and from Blanche back to Elsie, it was plain that his interest was deepening.

"May I ask a question or two?" ventured Vance, turning to King Nelson.

"Certainly."

"Is this young woman Elsie Rockwell?"

"Yes."

"The one whom you say Ike and Ford tried to murder?"

"The same."

"Ah, then I understand something that puzzled me before."

"What do you mean?"

"I will tell you later."

"Why not now?"

"What I have to say does not belong to this part of the narrative. Besides, whether I say anything or not depends upon——"

"Well?"

"Depends upon the manner in which you treat me."

"And that will depend wholly upon your degree of guilt."

"In this plot which you are unraveling, if I have played any part at all, it was of the most negative kind," declared Vance. "Whatever I did was of a passive kind, for I did not even know the end to which Ford was steering."

"And, perhaps, you mean to tell me that you did not know Ford had any criminal end in view?"

"Would you believe me if I assured you that that was so?" queried Vance.

"Now, you are asking more questions than I authorized you to do."

"But surely there can be no harm in answering my question?"

"I will not do it at this moment, at all events," rejoined Nelson. "In a little while more the whole naked truth of this great conspiracy will be laid bare. It will be impossible for any of the participators to hide his share. It is not likely that Ford will succeed in escaping, with the dragnet that I have spread for his capture."

With an air of philosophic resignation, Vance leaned back in his chair, making no effort to carry his share of the conversation further.

"And so Paul Norwell was my father?" interjected Elsie, in a trembling voice.

"Yes."

"And the woman who bore me down the Amazon—that devoted nurse who served me through all perils—is alive and in this house?"

"She is, and does not know that you are still among the living. It will be a joyful moment for her when she realizes it and sees you."

"Will you take me to her at once?" cried Elsie.

"In a very few moments, my dear child. I have yet a few words to say. My friends, you all know the circumstances under which the attempt to murder Miss Rockwell failed, and how, while there was yet life in her, she was found by Blanche Strull and her father, Luke."

"Is this other young woman Blanche Strull?" broke in Vance suddenly, and with an eagerness that astonished his hearers.

"Yes, she is Miss Strull," assented King Nelson.

"The deuce!"

"What is the matter?"

"Something has just occurred to me."

"Will you explain?"

"Not now."

"When, then?"

"At the same time that I tell you my share in this business."

"You love prolonged mystery," retorted King Nelson dryly, but Vance only smiled in an inscrutable way.

"From the saving of Miss Rockwell, or Miss Norwell, as we must now call her, you are all familiar with the story," resumed King Nelson.

"I ain't," broke in The Trompett sharply, uttering the first words she had spoken.

"Nor is this explanation being given for your benefit," rebuked the detective coldly. "Trompett, you will hear all this at a different time!"

"When?"

"The day you stand up in court to answer to the charges against you."

There came such an imperative knock at the door, that King Nelson answered loudly:

"Come in!"

In the instant following, the door flew open, and Mrs. Ferris, gliding to the desk, whispered in her chief's ear:

"That woman remembers everything now."

"Where is she?"

"Outside."

"In the hallway?"

"Yes."

"Is she in a condition to talk before so many people?"

"I think so."

"Then bring her in."

In a very few seconds, Mrs. Ferris reappeared, guiding Maria Ramon, around whose waist she had thrown a supporting arm.

With his usual forethought, King Nelson had sprung up to place a chair for the trembling nurse.

Elsie gazed upon her, trembling, and with moist eyes. She would have rushed to Maria's side had not the detective given her a warning look that caused her to draw back out of Maria's sight.

"You are feeling better?" asked King Nelson.

"Yes," assented Maria, in a voice which she strove to make strong and clear.

"And you remember that which I wanted to know?"

"It has come back to me."

"Tell us, then, the name of the bank at which you deposited the Norwell diamonds."

"It was at the Holborn National Bank, in a lock box in a vault in the basement of the building."

"The Holborn?" ejaculated the detective, astonished. "And do you remember whether you rented the box in your own name?"

"Yes, I did."

"And the key?"

"That was what it troubled me most to remember. On the day that I left poor Señor Norwell's little child at the lodgings"—how Elsie quivered!—"I hid the key by raising a board in the floor of the room that I had hired. It stayed there all the years that my memory was gone, when I lived at the institution. When my memory came back a few days—or a few weeks—ago, I went to those lodgings. The house had passed into other hands, but I succeeded in getting into the room. I found the key where I had hidden it under the floor. To make sure of the safety of the key, I now remember I stitched it into a very small pocket that I sewed on the underside of my skirt."

"And the key?" breathed King Nelson, in intense excitement.

"Is gone!" gasped Maria.

"Gone?" echoed the detective blankly.

"Yes; as soon as I remembered where I had placed the key I began to search my skirt. I found the pocket cut away—the key missing."

And Maria, raising a handkerchief to her eyes, began to sob convulsively.

Springing from his chair, King Nelson began to pace the floor.

"What is the last time that you remember to have seen the key?" he demanded excitedly.

"That last night that I was so tortured I know it was still in its hiding place."

"Before or after the torture?"

"Before; I cannot remember what followed that dreadful torment."

"Do you know anything about that key—what happened to it?" asked Nelson, turning to The Trompett.

"What would you give to know?" sneered the woman.

"There is only one thing to be done, and that must be done quickly," cried the detective, looking at his watch. "There is time to reach the Holborn National Bank before it closes, if we are quick. We will serve notice on the bank people."

"Am I to go with you?" asked Doctor Rockwell, leaping up.

"Yes."

"And I?" requested Phil.

"Come along."

"How about me?" demanded Reggy, who had kept so out of sight during the recital that few of those in the room had realized his presence.

"Yes; come, too."

Mrs. Ferris saw to calling one of the young men to look after the prisoners.

Elsie could no longer be kept from proclaiming herself to that old and devoted nurse.

During the affecting scene that followed, Allan Nelson and his three companions were speeding downtown as fast as the elevated train could carry them.

Into the Holborn Bank they raced, just two minutes before closing time, breaking in upon President Epworth with a suddenness that astonished that good old gentleman.

"Mr. Epworth," began King Nelson, "there is a box in your safety-deposit vault to which I fear the wrong person has the key. I have come to warn you not to let any one at that box until the matter has been cleared up."

"A deposit box? In whose name?" the president wanted to know.

"It was rented years ago, in the name of Maria Ramon."

"I remember the matter, then," rejoined Mr. Epworth, "all the more so because to-day some one came to look into the box."

"To look into it?" quavered King Nelson.

"Yes. He bore a proper written authorization, signed by the Ramon woman. He was a reputable attorney, so I did not question his right, in view of the written authorization."

"His name?" fairly shouted Nelson.

"Robert Ford."

"Ford?" groaned all four of the visitors, in chorus.

"When was he here?" demanded the detective, whose face had grown white.

"About four hours ago. One of my clerks, who went down to the box with him, reported to me that Ford took out of the box its only contents, an oblong package of some size."

"And then?"

"Why, Mr. Ford went away, of course. He seemed in a good deal of haste."

"Of course he was," gasped the detective, collapsing into a chair. "Gone—and taken the diamonds with him!"

CHAPTER XLI.

A HOT CHASE.

For less than fifteen seconds, King Nelson crouched in the chair.

He sprang to his feet, himself again. His plan of campaign was mapped out.

"I must use your telephone," he cried, starting for the closet.

Pulling the door to after him, he was quickly in communication with police headquarters. The chief there was made acquainted with the fact of Ford's flight, with a package almost beyond price.

"Turn the city upside down—but get him, and the package!" was the chief's desperate appeal to the chief in Mulberry Street.

Ringing off, he dashed out into the banker's office.

"Come, my friends, not a moment to be lost," he exclaimed.

They dashed from the building. As luck would have it, there was a cab at the corner.

"To the ship-news office, at the Battery. Drive like mad!" was Nelson's order.

Phil and Reggy were silent during that rapid drive, but Doctor Rockwell could not help expressing his surprise over the detective's agitation.

"Surely," he remonstrated, "you will find the diamonds with him, of course."

"That's just what worries me."

"He wouldn't throw them away?" ejaculated Doctor Rockwell incredulously.

"Just that!"

"What?"

"Sooner than have them fall into our hands."

"But that would be crazy—useless."

"No; it would be spite; vengeance against those who have upset the ruling dream of his life."

"But——"

"Here we are!" interjected King Nelson, as the cab slowed up. "The rest of you remain here."

Into the ship-news office darted King Nelson, demanding the list of the day's sailings. It was quickly handed to him. He scanned it with feverish eagerness.

"Bark *Esperanza* leaves pier twelve for Chile to-day," he mused swiftly. "That's the ship, if any, for it's next to impossible for the United States to extradite a fugitive from that country."

Out to the cab he raced, telling the driver to get to pier 12, North River, as fast as his horses could go.

During the ride, he said not a word. He appeared so feverishly absorbed that his companions addressed no word to him.

The cab halted at the pier.

"Come along with me," he quivered, as he sprang out of the vehicle. It was all they could do to keep up with this human steam engine.

"The *Esperanza?*" he demanded of a man whom he recognized as the man in charge of the pier.

"Sailed about an hour ago."

"Any tug here?"

"One at the end of the pier."

"Come on."

At a run, King Nelson reached the end of the pier, jumping aboard of the little steam craft that lay there.

"Cast off," he ordered, as the captain leaned out through the pilot-house window to look at him.

"What——"

"Cast off!"

"What——"

"Officer of the law—pursuit—quick!"

"Oh," rejoined the captain, comprehending a little more. "As to terms——"

"Arrange them when under way. Quick!"

By this time the detective's three companions were safely on board.

Orders were given that roused the boat's crew in quick order. Hawsers were cast off, and the captain halted before his rushing employer to demand:

"Which way?"

"Down the stream—the bay—catch bark *Esperanza.*"

Answering the clanging of the gong, the little tug moved away from the pier, while the captain passed the orders to the mate.

"Whew!" panted the detective, who, as soon as he saw the craft moving at her best speed, felt that he had time to fan himself and mop his face.

"See here, captain," he muttered, as that officer came along, "when you sight the bark, don't appear to be giving chase. Take a parallel course until you get right alongside. Then make a dash for her."

"I understand," nodded the captain. "And, if you don't want to be seen from the bark, you'd better step in here," opening the door of the room in which the officers and crew of the tug messed.

In there the quartet hastened.

Phil found himself regarding the great detective with not a little astonishment. It was the first time he had seen King Nelson show any evidence of being flustered.

There was silence in the cabin, not broken until they were off Staten Island, when the captain came to the door to say:

"There's the bark about a mile ahead, two points off port bow."

"Follow my original instructions."

"All right, sir."

Those in the cabin did not show themselves, nor even look out of the windows.

"Right alongside," reported the captain, ten minutes later. "I've signaled them that we want to board."

With the bound of a panther, King Nelson was out on the deck.

The tug was just grazing the side of the bark, from the rail of which her captain and one of the mates stood looking down to see what this interruption meant.

With a spring, King Nelson was upon the bark's deck, facing the two officers, his companions following with hardly less speed.

"You have passengers, captain?" asked King Nelson.

"Only one."

"Man or woman?"

"Man."

"Name?"

"Spencer."

"Where is he?"

"In the cabin. I'll call him."

"No; I'll go with you."

"Officer?"

"Yes."

"Thought so. No luck in taking passengers just as you're ready to cast off," grumbled the *Esperanza's* captain, leading the way down the after stairs.

But though they quickly looked into all the staterooms, there was not a sign of the passenger there, nor of the precious baggage which he was supposed to have with him.

"What baggage did he bring?" asked Nelson.

"Nothing but a satchel."

"I must search the ship," cried Nelson, as he reached the deck again.

"And my crew'll help you," was the promise of the accommodating captain. "I don't want any jailbirds with me. Mr. Forsyth"—to the mate—"call up four of the crew. Take them and search this craft from stem to

stern. If you find that passenger of our'n, bring him here by the scruff of the neck."

"Whatever you do," broke in the detective, "don't let him make 'way with the satchel, if he has it with him."

In the twinkling of an eye, the mate and sailors were searching the ship below.

There being enough men engaged in this work, the detective decided to remain on deck, amidships.

Five minutes went by.

"He saw you coming, suspected, and hid himself well," grumbled the captain. "No matter. This craft doesn't resume her voyage until he's found."

Just then King Nelson saw a man emerge upon deck, forward.

Though he was disguised, it did not take King Nelson more than an instant to recognize him as Ford.

In his hand the lawyer carried the satchel.

Uttering a half-suppressed cry, the detective dashed toward him, followed by his three companions.

Ford saw them coming, and darted to the rail.

High over his head he raised the satchel, then threw it out into the water.

Splash! Before the satchel had fairly struck the water, King Nelson dived over the rail, going straight down after it.

Phil and Reggy raced at the lawyer, seizing him on either side, while Doctor Rockwell and the bark's captain sprang to the rail.

Only bubbles came up where the detective had gone down.

Ten, fifteen, twenty seconds passed. More bubbles. A half minute had gone by, when something vague showed in the water. In another instant Nelson's head rose above the water.

In one hand he gripped the heavy satchel.

"Help!" he shouted.

The *Esperanza's* captain began to uncoil a rope.

"Can you hold the prisoner?" palpitated Phil Darrell.

"Till doomsday," returned Reggy.

"Make a supreme effort for one moment," shouted Phil to the detective.

Very quickly after he had ceased speaking, he succeeded in getting the rope's end under the detective's shoulders and in knotting it.

With a cheer, Doctor Rockwell and the captain began to haul in.

A minute later, King Nelson stood upon the deck, dripping like a spaniel. Most important of all, he had the satchel with him.

"Come along. I want to look at this satchel before we cast off," said the detective.

Stepping over to the tug's deck, he went into the mess cabin, followed by Phil and the doctor.

The bag's contents proved to be intact—a package made up of numerous small canvas sacks, each filled with glittering gems in the rough. The Norwell diamonds were safe at last!

The prisoner was brought over, handcuffed, and closely watched by Reggy. After heartfelt thanks had been given to the *Esperanza's* captain, the tug cast off and headed for New York.

Arrived at the pier, they found the cab still waiting for them. Ford was given a place inside, Reggy sitting outside with the driver to make room for him.

When fairly uptown, the lawyer, who had not once spoken, was securely blindfolded.

Shortly after that, Robert Ford, head and shoulders of the syndicate of crime, was a secure prisoner in Fort Nelson.

But startling surprises yet to come were the order of the day.

TO BE CONTINUED.

TWO SHOTS.

By DAVID RUSSY.

Ben Jones—that's my chum—bounded into my sanctum one night, excited and breathless, and, after having landed his hat in one corner, his coat in another, and himself on a chair, with a violence that threatened immediate destruction to the unoffending piece of furniture, he burst forth:

"Harry, you're a gone coon!"

I started up and glanced at the intruder, a little confused and wholly as excited as himself.

"How so?" I managed to articulate.

"You've got the championship of the town at billiards now, but in less than an hour you'll be champion no longer."

I sat down with a breath of relief. I had expected something horrible. Visions of closed banks with absconded cashiers, dead hunting dogs, et cetera, had floated before me.

"Explain yourself," said I.

"Well, to be brief, you know that man Sampson, from Buffalo?"

"Yes; what about him?"

"You know that he's the best billiard player this side of the Mississippi, don't you?"

"I don't know about that," I laughed; "but I've seen him play, and I think he's a first-class player."

"You just bet your life on that."

"But what has that got to do with me?"

"He's going to move to this town and stay, and therefore your championship has come to a sudden end."

"Pooh, pooh! Don't be in a hurry, young fellow, we haven't played yet."

"Do you mean to assert that you are in hopes of—of——" blurted forth Ben.

"Of beating him, you mean to say. Well, I don't know, but I wouldn't mind trying him."

"You wouldn't!" cried Ben, jumping up and seizing my hand. "Well, then, come along; he's at Smith's now."

Smith owned a fashionable billiard resort.

"I don't feel much like going out to-night," said I.

"You've got to, old boy! your honor is at stake! The whole town is at Smith's, betting that the colonel can beat you in ninety-nine chances out of a hundred."

"I couldn't resist Ben, he was such a persuasive fellow.

I put on my coat and hat, and, after having helped Ben to find his, we sauntered forth together and set out for Smith's. As Ben had said, all the billiard celebrities of the town were there, forming a circle about a military gentleman, in whom I recognized Colonel Sampson. As soon as I got my foot over the threshold, I was immediately seized upon by the whole assemblage, and bombarded with a thousand questions; or, rather, one question from a thousand hoarse throats.

It was to this effect:

"Will you play Colonel Sampson?"

I tried to answer, but the din drowned my voice for a moment. At last, however, I managed to make myself understood.

"Yes!" I shouted at the top of my voice.

The scene that followed beggars description.

All made a rush to secure a place within seeing distance of the best billiard table in the house, and, of course, a row ensued. Smith managed to soothe them, however, and five minutes later the colonel and I, in shirt sleeves and cue in hand, stood ready for action.

"Two hundred points up," was the game with three balls. I "led off," and made a "run" of eleven. The colonel shot and missed, and I made eight more, the colonel made two, I made four, the colonel followed up with seven and I made three. I looked up at the colonel's string, and noticed, to my astonishment, that he had fourteen points marked off. I was sure he only had made nine, but thinking that I might perhaps be mistaken, I said nothing, and played on. However, I determined to watch him. After about five minutes, I calculated that the colonel had made twelve points more, but, upon looking at his string, I saw that he had marked himself fifteen more.

My blood began to boil at his fraud, and "throwing up" my cue, I indignantly accused the colonel of cheating.

The change that came over my opponent's countenance was fearful. It became livid.

"Sir!" he thundered.

"I repeat it," I cried hotly. "You're a vile cheat!"

The next moment I heard the click of a revolver, and instinctively knowing that I was to be made the recipient of a "pill," I drew my own pistol, which I always carried about me, and cocked it. There was a simultaneous report from both pistols.

A few seconds passed in breathless anticipation.

I stood safe, and so did the colonel.

How was I saved?

As if Ben, who was standing near by, had read the question in my eyes, he silently pointed to the center of the billiard table.

I followed the direction of his finger with my eyes. Two flat lumps of lead lay there, side by side.

I looked at the spot where the colonel had just stood.

He was gone. The audience had ignominiously kicked him out of the room.

But you ask how was I saved?

The balls had met, and fallen harmlessly on the table, over the point of contact. Neither my championship at billiards or dueling has been disputed since.

CUNNING OF CROCODILES.

The following is a fair sample of how cunningly crocodiles, in common with all other wild animals, can conceal themselves in moments of danger:

After a happy week spent in the jungle, two hunters halted for breakfast, before making the last stage for headquarters and home, at a place called Poonarhvn—Anglice, garden of flowers—and while at breakfast were amused by watching a number of crocodiles, about eight or ten, sunning themselves on the surface of a small lake, or tank, as it is there called, of about an acre in extent. A sudden thought struck one of the men.

"I say, Murray, what fun it would be to try and catch some of those beggars in a net."

"Bravo!" said he. "Let's try it presently. Appu, send the horse keeper to the village and tell him to bring up all the men he can find and some long fishing nets. We will give a good santosum"—present.

The villagers scented some fun, and with the further stimulus of a santosum, very soon turned up to the number of thirty.

It was now eleven o'clock and scorching hot, the air quivering over the bare sandy plain in which the pond was situated. It was breast-deep, as the hunters knew, including about one foot or eighteen inches of heavy mud.

They tied two nets together so as to make one long enough to reach across the tank, about thirty yards, and this was heavily weighted along the bottom and arranged to be drawn with long ropes from each shore.

Immediately behind the net came a line, and men about a yard apart, with long, pointed poles, with which to prod the mud along the bottom of the net, and so drive the malingering gentlemen into proper position in front of the net. One of the hunters and his servant—for all entered into the sport—followed close up to the second line.

At it they now all went, splashing, shouting, stamping, and hauling, but—not a sign did they find of a single one of the brutes that they had seen before. They dragged that water backward and forward more than once, but their only reward was a deadly thirst, that lasted till night.

They had burrowed deeper into the mud than the hunters could reach them, for nothing could have escaped unseen out of the water.

THE CRAFTY COBBLER.

Many years ago, the husband of an old lady died without making his will, for the want of which necessary precautions his estate would have passed away from his widow, had she not resorted to the following expedient to avert the loss of the property. She concealed the death of her husband, and prevailed on an old cobbler, her neighbor, who was, in person, somewhat like the deceased, to go to bed at her house, and personate him, in which character it was agreed that he should dictate a will, leaving the widow the estate in question. An attorney was sent for to draw up the writings.

The widow, who, on his arrival, appeared in great affliction at her good man's danger, began to ask questions of her pretended husband calculated to elicit the answers she expected and desired.

The cobbler, groaning aloud, and looking as much like a person going to give up the ghost as possible, feebly answered:

"I intend to leave you half of my estates, and I think the poor old shoemaker who lives opposite is deserving the other half, for he has always been a good neighbor."

The widow was thunderstruck at receiving a reply so different from that which she expected, but dared not negative the cobbler's will for fear of losing the whole of the property; while the old rogue in bed—who was himself the poor old shoemaker living opposite—laughed in his sleeve, and divided with her the fruits of a project which the widow had intended for her sole benefit.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Bride, Who Took Dare, Dies When Boat Sinks.

The fact that she would not let a dare go unchallenged, caused the death by drowning of Mrs. David Crawford, 23 years old, of Tarrytown, N. Y., and a bride of five months, while she was on a pleasure cruise on the Hudson near Tarrytown.

When Mrs. Crawford remarked that she would like to get in the dory which was in tow of the yacht on which she was riding, other members of the party dared her to do so. She agreed if her brother would accompany her. When the latter stepped into the small boat it was swamped.

"Rattler" Causes Near Riot.

Driven desperate by hunger, a rattlesnake butted off the heavy glass covering of its cage in the biology classroom of the Lendale, Cal., High School, and caused a near riot before it was caught. It wiggled between the bars of a cage containing a gray mouse and devoured the little animal. While girl pupils were perched on seats, three of the boys dropped a glass case over the reptile.

Teach Women How to Farm.

The chamber of commerce of the parish of Pointe Coupee, La., has just inaugurated its compaign of education among boys and girls of the parish by opening a short course in agriculture.

The campaign is said to be the first of its kind in the State. Professor E. S. Richardson, director of agricultural extension in Louisiana, said the campaign would eventually embrace all parishes.

Great Bridge a Money-maker.

Thirty-one years ago Brooklyn Bridge, for a long time the greatest structure that spanned any river, was opened to traffic. Since that time the great suspension bridge has earned close to $24,000,000 in tolls for the city of New York, according to estimates based on the earnings of $23,224,572.31 up to one year ago. The greatest source of revenue is from street cars. An average of 4,000 per day at a revenue of 10 cents each pass over the bridge.

She Breaks Athletic Record.

A world's athletic record was broken recently in a track meet at Bryn Mawr College, a girls' college. Miss Helen Harris excelled the woman's record for the hop, step, and jump by covering 31 feet 10 inches, the previous mark being nine inches less.

In the same meet Miss Mary C. Morgan, an athletic young woman, ran the 100-yard hurdles in 15 2-5 seconds, and made a leap of seven feet one inch in the standing broad jump. Miss Margaret Thompson, of Chicago, Ill., threw a baseball 181 feet.

Automobile's Leap Kills Two.

Two men were killed and three women and one man injured in an automobile wreck three miles from Farmington, Minn., recently. A tire blew up while the car was dashing down a hill at thirty miles an hour. The car turned several somersaults and landed in a ditch. The dead were N. E. Nelson, member of a knitting firm in Duluth, and A. A. Cornell, of Northfield, owner of the car. Mrs. Nelson, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas A. Jenson, of Duluth, and Miss Nellie Pholstrub, and Agnes Peterson were the other occupants of the machine.

He Fakes Hero Act to Gain Raise and Glory.

Daniel Vinton Jauch, a watchman in the department of agriculture, at Washington, D. C., tried a short cut to fame and fortune recently, when he spread an alarm throughout the building that it was about to be blown up by dynamite.

A panic followed in which the clerks and officials sought safety. Later Jauch led an investigating party to the basement where four sticks of dynamite, with percussion cap inserted and a snuffed-out fuse burned to within two inches of the explosive, were found directly under where Secretary Houston sits. Jauch claimed he heard the sizzing of the fuse and snuffed it out. He showed two burned fingers to prove it.

Later he confessed he had planted the dynamite and given the alarm in the hope of receiving a promotion for his heroism. He was arrested. His mental condition will be examined.

Gamecock Commits Suicide.

A gamecock, which was the head of a flock of hens, at Milwaukee, Wis., apparently liked some ducks in the poultry yard better, for he was their constant companion, except when they went swimming. When they entered the water, he sat on the bank and watched them. This spring the hens asserted their right and pecked the ducks so badly that it was necessary to kill them. Then the rooster ended his life by starvation. He refused to eat the food placed before him.

Town Puts Ban on Circuses.

The shrill notes of the circus calliope and the banter of the circus clown no longer will be heard in Kenosha, Wis. The council has passed a resolution excluding tented shows and carnivals from the limits of the city. This action followed a contest between the mayor and some members of the council over a permit for a street carnival.

Calf is Covered With Wool.

A freak calf, covered with black shaggy wool instead of hair, and having a head somewhat similar to a sheep, has been born on the farm of Joseph Fuenfinger, of Flower Valley, Pa. The calf appears to be healthy.

A Competent Umpire.

Silk O'Loughlin, the veteran American League umpire, differs from most men of his profession in that he is competent and knows it, and is indifferent to all attacks on him and shows it. Most umpires are incompetent and don't know it, and worry about what the fans think of them, but try not to show it.

"My skin is tough enough to shed the roasts that are heaped on me. I don't care what a newspaper says about

me, and I'm not offended if a ball player calls me a name in a hot game," says O'Loughlin.

O'Loughlin never makes any attempts to escape from pop bottles, cushions, or other missiles thrown at him. He takes the attacks of spectators as a part of his business without losing his temper or feeling abused.

"Wild Man" Frightens Town.

After terrorizing the residents of Holton, Mich., and vicinity for several days, John Brom, aged 55 years, was captured by a posse of deputy sheriffs. With his ragged clothes and matted beard Brom resembled the typical wild man.

He was found to be wearing three suits of underclothing, four shirts, two vests, two pairs of pants, and a coat, but all were so badly torn that they resembled a mass of rags. On his feet were leather boots without soles.

Harry Thaw to Avoid Heat.

Harry Thaw has gone to Gorham, in the White Mountains, where he will spend the summer at a hotel. He was accompanied by his custodian, Sheriff Holman A. Drew and Deputy Clark D. Stevens. In the months since he escaped from the insane asylum at Matteawan, N. Y., the slayer of Stanford White has almost completely regained the health he lost while imprisoned. It will be a long time before his case is decided by the United States supreme court.

"Chief Sam" of for Africa.

"Chief Sam's" steamer, *Liberia*, cleared Portland, Me., recently, for Salt Pond on the Gold Coast of Africa, where it is planned to found a colony of American negroes. The ship will call at Galveston, Texas, where 100 Oklahoma negroes are expected to board her. The *Liberia* is commanded by Captain L. S. McKenzie and is registered under the British flag.

Trainmen Hurled into Trees.

When a locomotive of a work train on the Ontario & Western branch was derailed near Oakland, Sullivan County, N. Y., the engine driver and brakemen were hurled from the cab lodging in the tops of trees on an embankment. The driver sustained injuries about the back, hips, and side, and a laceration of the face, and the brakeman was bruised about the body.

Woman is Manager of Boy's Ball Team.

Miss Sophia Mathis, head of the physical training department of the Galesburg, Ill., grade schools is the manager of a baseball team. She sits on the bench and directs the progress of the games in which her team plays.

Miss Mathis' one regret is that she is not eligible to take the field with her players, who comprise a team in the eight-grade league. No smoking or swearing is allowed in the league.

Women of Norway.

The first and most vivid impression received by the student who moves among Norwegians is the position of women. It seems to differ from their present position in any other country of Europe.

They are not submissive, like the English or American women, and yet they are not aggressive. They are neither timid nor loud. They dress with modesty; and they dress fittingly, as when they go out for sport.

But the great fact is their social position. Here they really seem to move among men as equals; and that position seems to be now accepted without any real damage either to the womanhood or manhood of the country. On the contrary, both seem to be better for it.

The achievement of the voting power by Norwegian women is only a part of this vast movement, which is represented by a claim of equality in society as a whole. The women of Norway have worked for that greater aim simultaneously with the suffrage situation ever since 1885, and they have achieved their aims together.

Practically all the professions are now open to women in Norway, except the priesthood and the army. Men and women are educated together at school and college. They form clubs and societies together both for sports, pleasure, and serious objects.

The young men, indeed, are now said to refuse to have separate societies, and the two sexes are more and more working together in all spheres of life. Women sit on the juries, and there is now one lady judge.

Telegraph Only 70 Years Old.

At this time, when it is freely predicted that the wireless will soon supersede the telegraph lines in transmitting commercial messages, it is interesting to note that the telegraph is only seventy years old. It was just seventy years ago that Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor, sent the first words by wire: "What hath God wrought?" Now few scientists doubt but that the telegraph will be discarded for the more efficient wireless.

Has Weasel's Body, Claws Like a Cat.

Will Hanson and Fred Volz, are displaying a strange animal which they captured in a thicket north of Connersville, Ind. The animal is the size of a rat, with a body like a weasel, a head like a squirrel, and claws longer and sharper than those of a house cat. It has thin, light-brown hair, is very quiet, and sleeps most of the time.

Indian Strikes Out Twenty-one.

Harold Clark, a full-blood Pueblo Indian, of Albuquerque, N. M., who recently struck out twenty-one men in a nine-inning game with the State University, has signed a contract with the Sioux City, Iowa, Western League club. He was a pitcher with the local Government Indian School team.

College Pitcher Fans Twenty.

Pitcher Masters of the William Jewel College team, struck out twenty men in a game at Liberty, Mo., with Warrensburg Normal. Masters' team won the game, 3 to 2, in the fifteenth inning.

Crop Yield Increased.

Great interest is taken in France just now in a new method by which the yield of crops per acre is enormously increased. In one test case the increase of wheat has been three times above that grown in similar soil in the same neighborhood.

The remarkable value of the method is indicated by the statement that it has made 20 grains of wheat produce 700,000 in one year.

The method consists in preparing seed beds in widely

spaced lines on very mellow land; then at the end of two months dividing the tufts springing from each grain, replanting each of these rooted shoots thus detached, and finally hoeing and earthing up these new plants many times in such manner as to provoke at all the points brought into intimate contact with the earth the growth of numerous adventitious shoots, each of which bear an ear.

The system is not really new, but a very ancient one used immemorially by the Chinese and to it is due the enormous yield of their fields, which have been treated like gardens.

He Strikes Out Every Batter Who Faced Him.

Bob Long, formerly a California State League pitcher, and now manager of a Cincinnati, Ohio, semiprofessional team, struck out twenty-seven men, all that faced him, in nine innings, in a game recently. Bill Stickland, also a veteran California player, caught for Long, whose team scored eight runs.

Finding Ore by Wireless.

According to an announcement of the German Society for Investigating the Internal Structure of the Earth, it has discovered subterranean springs and ore deposits by means of wireless telegraphy. It has discovered their depth by the utilization of electrical wave lengths after the method discovered by Professor Leimbach.

Wireless telegraphy was used by Professor Leimbach in March, 1911, to communicate between the potash mines in the northern Hartz Mountains. He then sent messages a distance of a mile and a half 1,000 feet below the surface.

Pays Ketchell Slayer Reward.

Colonel R. P. Dickerson, of Springfield, Mo., has paid the circuit court $6,129.75 as the reward offered by him for the capture of the slayer of Stanley Ketchel, champion middleweight boxer, who was shot and killed near Springfield a few years ago. Dickerson refused to pay the reward, as he claimed he offered it for the dead body of the slayer. The murderer was captured and sent to prison, and the courts ruled that Dickerson must pay the reward to Joseph and Thomas Haggard and Thomas Murphy, farmers, of Niangua, Mo.

42 Years Without Vacation.

City Paymaster John H. Timmerman, of New York, announced recently, according to his annual custom, that he would take no vacation this summer. This makes forty-two years that he has worked without any time off, winter or summer.

"I'm in perfect condition so far as health is concerned," said Mr. Timmerman, "so why should I take a vacation?"

Mr. Timmerman has been paymaster for twenty-eight years. For twelve years previous to that he was secretary to the Eleventh Ward Bank.

Wagner's 3,000th Hit.

"Hans" Wagner, the veteran shortstop of the Pittsburgh National League team, recently made his 3,000th hit in seventeen years of major-league baseball. It was a two-bagger off Pitcher Mayer with no one on base in the ninth inning. He subsequently scored Pittsburgh's only run of the game on two outs. He was applauded when he made the hit, and again when he crossed the plate.

Wagner, when the series opened here with Philadelphia last Friday, had 2,998 hits to his credit. He failed to connect in the first two games, but made it 2,999 yesterday. To-day's hit came on his last turn at bat.

The only other player who is said to have made 3,000 hits in his major-league career was Adrian C. Anson, who batted 3,047 in twenty-two years.

Target Rifle Angers Bear.

When a large bear attacked a calf in his back yard, A. B. McCloskey, a farmer, of Hyner, Pa., rushed to his porch and shot the animal with a 22-caliber target gun. The bullet only angered the bear, which threw McCloskey to the ground and mangled one leg and an arm. The animal then escaped. McCloskey will recover.

Says Golf is Harmful.

Doctor Lyttelton, head master of Eton School, in England, at a meeting in support of the "Duty and Discipline Movement," at Landsdown House, said that golf, on which England spent $70,000 yearly, did a grave social harm, because the players insisted upon having caddies at all hours, and thus created a "blind alley" occupation.

Bridge, too, he declared as a grave national danger. Any game, he said, was a menace that kept Cambridge undergraduates abed on Sunday and other mornings and throughout the whole day in rooms full of tobacco smoke, when they ought to be out in the sunshine.

Teachers Can Unionize.

Public-school teachers, of Cleveland, Ohio, won a point recently in their fight to form a labor union. The common pleas court granted an injunction forbidding the board of education from enforcing a resolution recently passed providing that no teacher shall be employed who is a member of a labor union.

"Ohio laws recognize and encourage labor organizations," said the court, "and the board of education has no right to provide that future contracts shall not be entered into between it and persons affiliated with labor unions."

Moriarty Scientific as Ball Purloiner.

Manager Hugh Jennings considers Moriarty one of the best base runners he has seen in his twenty or twenty-five years in professional baseball. Jennings has often said that if Moriarty possessed the speed that belonged to Davy Jones he would make a hundred base thefts in a season. Crawford, of the same opinion, says:

"If George Moriarty possessed the speed that belongs to Ty Cobb or Clyde Milan or Eddie Collins he would set a base-stealing record for the major leagues. Moriarty is the best man I have ever seen at 'pegging a pitcher.' By 'pegging a pitcher' I mean telling beforehand what he is going to do, where he is going to throw the ball. Moriarty studies the pitcher more than any other player. He can watch a pitcher a couple of times and then tell nine times out of ten whether he is going to throw to one of the bases or to the catcher."

Moriarty is crafty. That fact is well known. When he gets on first base his entire attention is focused on the pitcher. The chances are he will take a long lead to draw a throw, but instead of being set to go to second he is set for the slide back to first, and it is a comparatively easy matter for him to beat the throw to the initial sack.

There are pitchers in the American League who must have their throw to first. Moriarty knows these men, and he always works to have them get the throw off their minds. Accomplishing that, he takes a second lead away from first. The chances are this lead will lack two or three feet of what the first lead held, and the pitcher, glancing over, will note the decreased distance.

The chances are he will make a mental note to the effect that the runner will not start a steal, and then, just as his arm moves in the pitch to the plate Moriarty is off for second. The pitcher had failed to notice that in the seemingly careless attitude of the runner there were still the tenseness and the alertness that always precede the start of a base theft. There are other pitchers who signify their intentions by a raise of the foot.

"Rounding the Horn."

Like a tale from Cooper, barring the bloody fights with pirates or tremendous struggles with titanic storms, is the log of the four-masted schooner which the other day crept into New York harbor 154 days out from San Francisco.

Two months and twenty-one days it took this stanch ship to beat from the Golden Gate down to the Horn. Another day saw her to the eastward of lower Patagonia. And then began the long, slow voyage up the coast of the Americas to the second crossing of the line, and on, on, monotonously, tiresomely on, until the hearts of the crew were finally gladdened by the siren voices of "lil ol' New York."

It is almost as if a group of adventurers, more than threescore years belated, were to pile into a prairie schooner at the ferry dock in Hoboken and hie them to the old-fashioned ox-team way to salt water 3,000 miles beyond.

A wealth of fancy weaving has been knit into our literature based on the journey "around the Horn." But soon it will be a tradition as remote as the fabled galleons of Spain or the pursuing corvettes of Drake. For with the cleaving of the Isthmus of Panama, the Horn will retire from the maritime stage until, perchance, in some far-distant hereafter it may be brought into renewed importance by a growth of lower South America's coastwise commerce, of which we to-day can only dimly dream.

Risk in Motoring.

Actuaries of accident-insurance companies find that the man who drives a racing automobile in speedway contests runs 3,000 times the normal risk of death or injury. He must be charged $350 for a $10,000 policy covering not more than twenty-four hours in practice speeding or actual racing.

The figures are suggestive to sane and law-abiding automobilists who are subjected to risk of life and limb because of the efforts of a few speed maniacs to emulate upon the public roads the feats of the drivers of racing cars upon courses especially adapted to fast driving.

The normal risk in motoring—that is to say, the risk encountered where the traffic conditions are normal—is less than the risk involved in farm labor, where farm animals and tools and machinery are handled.

The accident underwriters, we believe, rate automobile owners according to their vocation. A business or professional man who would get the lowest premium rate if he did not drive an automobile gets that rate regardless of his ownership of an automobile. That is a right rating, because others than automobilists are run down and maimed or killed by the speedster. But there is a considerable loss to accident-insurance companies that is due directly to violations of reasonable speed regulations.

Stops Aerial Elopement.

The seventeen-year-old daughter of a wealthy resident of the West End of Berlin, Germany, was intercepted at the Johannisthal aërodrome, recently, as she was about to elope in an aëroplane with a German aviator.

The girl received the airman's attentions against the wishes of her parents and had been forbidden to see him again; so she decided to fly with him.

He took her from her home early in the morning in a taxicab; but her father heard of the project, pursued the couple to Johannisthal, and arrived there in time to enlist the services of a policeman who took the would-be elopers in charge just as the airman was about to help the girl into his aëroplane.

Crime in Egypt.

The most important section of the report that has just been issued by Sir Malcolm McIlwraith, the judicial adviser of the Egyptian government, deals, to use his own words, with "the continuous rise in crimes and serious misdemeanors." In 1912 the number of crimes committed was 2,828 and of misdemeanors 79,006; in 1913 they were respectively 4,096 and 92,938. Sir Malcolm declares that "poverty, the cause of so much crime in Europe, can scarcely be said to be the origin of so much of it here," and he continues:

"The grinding penury which is so common a feature in large centers of population in Europe hardly exists in Egypt. The first necessaries of life—food and shelter—are within reach of all. Cold and inclement weather, which add such poignancy to the sufferings of the submerged class in other countries, are almost unknown in this favored climate. The habitual charity of the people toward each other is such that the terrors of complete destitution are not to be found there. But though poverty in its direct forms is little met with, the standard of wealth among the agricultural classes is not high, and rapacity and greed are as rife among them as among the peasantry of other nations. These characteristics have been stimulated during the last few years in Egypt.

"The general rise in the standard of living which has marked the last decade—a rise which has affected the villages as well as the towns—has inspired a spirit of rivalry and emulation among the people and a desire to outdo their neighbors in extravagance and ostentation, which easily leads to crime when the means of gratifying such desires fail. A thirst for revenge when a real or imaginary injury has been suffered, is a still more potent cause of crime in Egypt."

Olympic Athletic Jury.

The rules committee of the International Amateur Athletic Federation recently adopted a suggestion originating with Franz Reishel, the French delegate, that the referee at the Olympic games should be displaced by an international jury of five members. It is to be recommended to the Olympic committee at Paris.

The referee is not, however, to be abolished altogether, but the power of the decision in cases of protest is to be transferred to the jury which is to be nominated by

the Council of the International Amateur Athletic Federation. The jury must remain on the infield during the games.

Another step tending to internationalize the Olympic games was the adoption of the American suggestion that judges should be international. The committee recommends the appointment of the world's greatest authorities in particular events to judge those events. Thus America suggested that Richard Coombes, of Australia, should be appointed judge of walking.

Particular significance was lent to these proposals by the fact that they had the support of the German delegates.

Ford Takes Over Hospital.

Henry Ford's offer to take over the Detroit General Hospital and to finance it for a poor man's hospital was formally accepted recently by the board of trustees. The action was taken after a referendum vote of the subscribers to the Hospital Fund, there being not one negative voice.

The deeds and other papers necessary to the conveyance of the property will be made out at once, and Mr. Ford will send checks aggregating $400,000 to subscribers to the fund, appoint an administrative board for the hospital, set aside a big fund for its completion, and then go on a vacation. Upon his return he will take up the details of the management of the hospital.

Cupid Scores on Giants.

Ferd M. Schupp, pitcher for the New York Giants, was married recently at the Church of the Annunciation, in New York, to Miss Minnie T. Schaeffer, of Louisville, Ky.

Schupp invited the whole outfit to his wedding, and they appeared at the church promptly at 8 o'clock, only to find that the bridegroom, his bride, "Red" Murray, the best man, and Arthur Fromme had been there an hour earlier and gone their ways.

Later there was a big wedding supper, and all the Giants were there.

"Time you got married," some one said to Murray.

"Maybe it won't be so long before I do," replied Red, and looked at Miss Jackson, the bridesmaid, who colored. They are engaged.

Here's a Tip for the Scouts.

Howard Ehmke, the nineteen-year-old youth who left high school this year to join the pitching staff of the Los Angeles team of the Pacific Coast Baseball League, won his eighth straight victory recently when he shut out San Francisco, 6 to 0. He has not suffered a defeat.

New Liberty Bell.

Its clapper to be silent, bound by four finely woven chains, until the women of Pennsylvania get the vote, a bronze "justice bell," exact replica of the original Liberty Bell in Independence Hall, is to be presented to the Pennsylvania Woman Suffrage Association by a Philadelphia woman. Her name is withheld.

The suffragists announce that during the year following the hoped-for passage of the suffrage bill through the second legislature, a guard of honor will escort the woman's "justice bell" through the sixty-seven counties of the Commonwealth. Only Philadelphia will not see it until Election Day, in 1915, the suffragists believe, when the enfranchisement issue, so they are sure, will be submitted to the people.

A ceremony is being planned for the casting of the bell at Troy. This will take place in the near future. The bell is to weigh 2,000 pounds, and is to be built of the best bronze. The diameter at the mouth will be forty-six inches, the height four feet. It will cost several thousand dollars. Its tone will ring in "F," the key of nature—but it will not ring until the women of the State get the ballot. Then it will clang out on this city.

Finds Daughter After 27 Years.

A father and daughter who had been separated twenty-seven years were united on a voyage across the Atlantic on the steamer *Finland*, which arrived at New York recently.

Gustav Dunkel, seventy-five years old, a native of Berlin took passage on the vessel, unaware that his daughter and her own child were also passengers in the second cabin.

While the *Finland* was plowing her way across, Anna Leber, a five-year-old Austrian maiden, made friends with Dunkel, who told her stories, played with her, and sang songs which she had never heard before.

By accident Dunkel met the mother of the child. Something about the appearance of each attracted the other, and in a short time they learned that they were father and daughter.

When the ship docked, Dunkel, his daughter, and granddaughter left New York for Baltimore, where they will meet Dunkel's oldest son, now a resident of that city. Later all four will go to Denver to visit the husband of Dunkel's daughter, a contractor of that city.

Four Captive Children Found Starving.

Kept prisoners for more than six months in one small room in their father's cottage, at McLean and Jerome Avenues, Yonkers, N. Y., three children, the oldest six years old, with a blind youth, said to be their uncle, were released recently by an agent of the Children's Society.

Two of them, Peter and May Yoder, three and four years old, were unconscious from starvation. Helen, six, was unable to walk. The blind youth, thought to be a brother of his jailer, was reduced to a shadow from lack of food.

The discovery came when neighbors, aroused before daylight by groans and weeping, traced the sounds to the Yoder cottage. They notified the Children's Society, and Agent Harry Cook was sent to investigate.

Cook had no trouble in getting into the house, and soon heard moans coming from a room on the second floor. He tried the door, and finally broke it in. The room was darkened and he had to tear away a curtain.

In a corner lay the two little girls and the boy. Their clothes were in shreds, their hair matted, and their bodies almost skeletons. Near them was Joseph Yoder, the blind uncle, faint, but conscious.

While the agent tried to revive the two smaller children the older girl told him they had had little food during their imprisonment and nothing at all for five days. They did not know where their father was. He visited them two days before, but brought them no food, they said.

The oldest girl told officials at the society that the mother died a year ago. Since then, the child said, she

and her brothers and sisters had eaten only occasionally, and finally, when they became very hungry, were locked up. Their father visited them occasionally and brought them bits of food, she said.

Feds Want Atlantic League.

According to reports from some of the towns in the Atlantic League, negotiations are under way, and nearly completed, for the purchase of that league as a farm for the Federal League. The story is that the Federal League has made an offer for the whole league, intending to make it a minor "outlaw" league in which young players may be developed for their circuit, as they are in the minor leagues in organized ball, and also for the cast-offs from the big circuit. The Federal League practically promised all the players who signed with them not to release them without any place to go if they were found wanting. As a result all the teams in the Federal circuit are carrying more players than they need, with a consequent drain upon their treasury. George S. Ward, vice president of the Brooklyn Federals, said that he had heard of no such contemplated purchase, although he admitted that there had been talk of the Federals buying a minor league as a farm. Club owners of the Atlantic League refuse to discuss the report.

"Let 'em Die" Says Pastors.

Boston pastors have indorsed the suggestion of London clergy that militant suffragettes be allowed to die in jail instead of being forcibly fed during hunger strikes.

"If they don't eat, it's up to them," said the Reverend A. H. Nazarian, pastor of the People's Temple.

"Let them die, they have a right to,' 'said the Reverend H. Gifford, pastor of the Brookline Baptist Church.

The Reverend C. F. Dole, of the Jamaica Plain Unitarian Church, said the hunger strikers were bluffing.

Knocks Home Run, then Dies.

Charles Clarke, 18 years old, of 114 East Ninetieth Street, New York, died of heart disease just after making a home run in a ball game in Dyckman Street, between Naegle and Post Avenues, recently.

Clarke was the catcher of the St. Stephen's Roman Catholic Church baseball team, known as the Lyceums. This club was playing a game in a vacant lot with the Knights of Columbus team, of St. Vincent de Paul's Church. When Clarke went to bat in the fifth inning he knocked what seemed to be a two-base hit. In the excitement he kept on running and stretched his two-bagger into a homer.

After crossing the plate he sat on an embankment. Suddenly he began to wave his arms. His companions called a policeman, who summoned Doctor Scholer from the Washington Heights Hospital. The boy died before the surgeon arrived.

Talking by Wireless.

As a result of recent experiments, William Marconi hopes to establish soon a wireless telephone between his office in Marconi House and his country house at Fawley, Hampshire, England, sixty-seven miles away.

"Already we have had conversations with Berlin," said Marconi recently. "We could not hear all the words, but the test was very promising, seeing that we were talking over 600 miles. Recently we had wireless telephone communications between warships forty miles apart which was entirely satisfactory.

"In fact, we could hear conversations going on in the room. 'I want a drink,' was one of the scraps we overheard."

Marconi House is almost daily in telephone communication with the Marconi works at Chemsford, thirty-one miles away.

Andree Balloon Not Found.

The officials at Yakutsk, Siberia, report that they know nothing of the ruins of a balloon, which as said to have been found in that vicinity. It was announced that the balloon was that of Professor S. A. Andree who made an attempt in 1897 to reach the north pole in the air. He was never heard from.

Trace of White Makes "Mixed Blood."

The supreme court, at Washington, recently refused to set aside sales of Indian lands on the White Earth (Minnesota) Reservation to whites on the government's plea that Indians with less than 50 per cent white blood were not "mixed bloods" within the meaning of the law which permits mixed bloods to sell their holdings. The court held that an Indian with any white blood at all was a "mixed blood."

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